Football Coca-Cola Cup final: Chelsea 2 Middlesbrough 0 (after extra time)

Boro relive Wembley nightmare

David Lacey at Wembley

AT LEAST this time Middlesbrough brought a sweat to Chelsea's brow. But the delayed entrance of new boy Paul Gascoigne here last Sunday could not prevent this season's Coca-Cola Cup final going the way of last season's FA Cup final.

Again Chelsea defeated Boro 2-0, the goals coming in extra-time from Frank Sinclair and Roberto Di Matteo after the First Division side had frustrated their Premiership opponents with an effective mixture of disciplined defending and inspired goalkeeping.

Bryan Robson's team, however, could not find the attacking inspiration to break down a Chelsea defence superbly organised by Michael Duberry and Frank Leboeuf. The Teesside roar that greeted Gascoigne, a $5.7 million signing from Rangers last week, in the 64th minute did not find an echo on the pitch. After so long without regular match practice Gascoigne was just not up to it.

Even so he came close to stealing the headlines by getting himself sent off. Having been booked by Peter Jones for fouling Gianfranco Zola, he risked dismissal by bringing down Dennis Wise just outside the Boro penalty area.

A red card then and Gascoigne's return to English football would have lasted only a few minutes longer than his farewell appearance, seven years earlier, when he was stretchered off in tears in the first-half of the 1991 FA Cup final, between Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest with a serious knee injury. For Boro that would have been the ultimate anticlimax.

Nevertheless the appearance of Gascoigne did have a pivotal effect on the course of the match. Up to that point Wise's influence for Chelsea had been severely limited by the close attentions of Robbie Mustoe but thereafter, with Boro's midfield reorganised to accommodate Gascoigne, Wise practically took the game over.

Yet Gascoigne's rustiness was not Boro's biggest disappointment, which lay more in their failure to exploit Paul Merson's domination of Graeme Le Saux on their right wing before half-time. Le Saux, like Gascoigne, had missed a number of games through injury and was lacking both pace and sharpness.

Merson, however, was slow to take full advantage of Le Saux's discomfort, preferring to pump angled balls in towards Marco Branca and Hamilton Ricard, an unusually cumbersome Colombian, which were easily intercepted by the Chelsea centre-backs.

Chelsea were disappointing elsewhere until Wise took charge. Yet in the space of four minutes midway through the first half they might well have put the final beyond Boro's reach. First Mark Hughes met a dipping centre from Le Saux with a stunning volley which Mark Schwarzer, hurling himself high to his left, somehow managed to push wide. Then Zola saw a shot take a sufficient deflection off Gianluca Festa to divert it past a post, and finally Hughes, rising well to meet Zola's cross, could not get enough power in his downward header to beat the goalkeeper.

In fact Schwarzer was not beaten until two minutes before the hour, when Zola gathered a return pass from Dan Petrescu and drove the ball against the crossbar from 25 yards. By then Boro had seen what turned out to be their two best chances of winning fail to produce an actual shot.

In the 55th minute Merson found Ricard in space only for Sinclair to tackle the Colombian before he could bring the ball under control. Two minutes later Andy Townsend sent Ricard through but again Sinclair's covering was immaculate.

However, it was the right-back's presence at the other end in the 95th minute that proved more significant. Merson's misdirected return pass to Gascoigne inadvertently set up a Chelsea move that saw Sinclair and Zola work the ball out to Wise on the right. Wise centred from the byline and Sinclair headed in at the near post.

Early in the second period of extra-time Mustoe slipped as he went to intercept Zola's corner and missed the ball, leaving Di Matteo to slip between Steve Vickers and Nigel Pearson to score clinically.

Gripping stuff . . . Liverpool's Paul Ince tackles a spectator during one of the pitch invasions that marred his side's controversial 3-2 win over Barnsley at Oakwell. The referee incensed the home crowd by sending off three Barnsley players PHOTO: SIMON MOONEY

Results

COCA-COLA CUP FINAL: Chelsea 2, Middlesbro 0 (aet, 0-0 at 90min).

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsenal 1, Sheff Wed 0; Barnsley 2, Liverpool 3; Bolton 2, Leicester 0; Coventry 1, Derby 0; Crystal Palace 1, Tottenham 3; Everton 1, Aston Villa 4; Manchester Utd 2, Wimbledon 0; Southampton 2, Newcastle 1.
Leading positions: 1, Man Utd (played 32, points 63); 2, Arsenal (29-57), Liverpool (31-5[illegible]).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE:
Division One: Birmingham 1, WBA 0; Bradford C 2, Man City 1; Charlton 4, Notm For 2; Huddersfld 1, QPR 1; Ipswich 1, Reading 0; Oxford 2, Norwich 0; Sheff Utd 2, Port Vale 1; Stockport 0, Crewe 1; Stoke 0, Tranmere 3; Sunderland 2, Bury 1; Wolves 2, Portsmouth 0.
Leading positions: 1, Nottm Forest (39-77), 2, Sunderland (39-76), 3, Middlesboro (38-75).

Division Two: Brentford 2, Oldham 1; Burnley 2, Grimsby 1; Carlisle 0, Bournemth 1; Chesterfld 3, Millwall 1; Gillingham 2, Fulham 0; Plymouth 2, Wrexham 0; Preston 1, Wigan 1; Walsall 2, Luton 3; Watford 1, Northmptn 1; Wycombe 1, Bristol City 0; York 1, Blackpool 1.
Leading positions: 1, Watford (40-77), 2, Bristol City (39-75), 3, Grimsby (38-65).

Division Three: Barnet 1, Hartlepool 1; Cambridge 1, Darlington 0; Cardiff 0, Brighton 0; Hull 0, Macclesfld 0; Lincoln 0, Colchester 1; Mansfield 2, Peterboro 0; Notts Co 1, Orient [illegible]; Rochdale 4, Doncaster 1; Rotherham 0, Scarboro 0; Scunthorpe 2, Torquay 0; Shrewsbury 1, Exeter 1; Swansea 2, Chester [illegible].
Leading positions: 1, Notts County (40-8[illegible]), 2, Torquay (40-69), 3, Macclesfield (40-67).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Premier Division: Celtic 0, Hearts 0; Dunfermline 2, Rangers 3; Hibernian 1, Aberdeen 1; Motherwell 1, Dundee U 0; St Johnstone 1, Kilmarnock 0.
Leading positions: 1, Celtic (30-63), 2, Hearts (30-61), 3, Rangers (30-60).

First Division: Ayr 2, St Mirren 2; Dundee 2, Stirling A 0; Morton 1, Falkirk 1; Hamilton 0, Airdrie 2, Partick 1; Raith 2.
Leading positions: 1, Dundee (30-65), 2, Raith (30-53), 3, Falkirk (31-53).

Second Division: Clydebank 1, Inverness CT 0; Clyde 3, Queen Sth 1; East Fife 4, Brechin 1; Forfar 2, Livingston 1; Stenhsmr 0, Stranraer [illegible].
Leading positions: 1, Clydebank (30-55), 2, Livingston (30-49), Stranraer (30-46).

Third Division: Arbroath 2, Cowdnbth 0; Berwick 1, Montrose 1; E Stirling 2, Albion 0; Queens Pk 1, Alloa 1; Ross Co 0, Dumbarton 0.
Leading positions: 1, Alloa (30-60), 2, Arbroath (28-54), 3, Ross County (30-51).

Cryptic crossword by Crispa

Across

1 Action about fourth estate is discouraged (9)
6 A way a politician can create an impression (5)
9 Greek department of organisation with fur problem (5)
10 At sea for the most part (2,3,4)
11 It's the same old story — but note the appeal! (10)
12 Home for a large number of children (4)
14 Austere man turning up on wrong train (7)
15 Most preposterous attempt to get everybody in (7)
17 Having a roof over one's head (7)
19 A soldier in nasty accommodation may well be gloomy! (7)
20 Prison makes many mature (4)
22 Give voice about a parent being overwhelming (10)
25 A lot stood out for natural growth (9)
26 Go in a little — a very little (5)
27 Downy, and that's essential for a youngster (5)
28 The income women tend to get organised (9)

Down

1 Theatrical make-up (5)
2 Drippers ordered without direction produced water in droplets (9)
3 Horsemanship, or a mathematical statement about it (10)
4 The boy admitting a leaning for cheese (7)
5 The city tried to change (7)
6 Watch money trickle away (4)
7 A strike to cause embarrassment (5)
8 The American detective is more colourful and heavyweight (9)
13 Guy's after dramatic work, though really no friend of work! (10)
14 A top man not backing up university in the USA (9)
16 Scoffed after the Continental mini broke down, being put out (9)
18 Undistinguished character (7)
19 Seat five hundred as arranged (7)
21 A note to file — "Hold on" (5)
23 How the Scots cry hail (5)
24 View in one's pyjamas and dressing-gown (4)

Last week's solution

Motor Racing Brazilian Grand Prix

McLaren double act triumphs

Alan Henry at Interlagos

MIKA HAKKINEN and David Coulthard crushed the opposition for the second time in a month as their McLaren-Mercedes cars sauntered to an unchallenged one-two in the Brazilian Grand Prix.

Formula One's most impressive double act at least spared spectators any repeat of the team orders that saw Coulthard wave Hakkinen through to victory in Australia.

Hakkinen accelerated straight into the lead from pole position with Coulthard tucking in behind as the pack braked for the first corner. Heinz-Harald Frentzen's Williams slotted into third place and Eddie Irvine outpaced his Ferrari team leader Michael Schumacher.

Coulthard said: "I would like to have been first rather than second but I made a slow start on the uphill gradient away from the line and that was that. Unless he had a problem, I wasn't going to get close to him, particularly as I had traction problems out of the last couple of corners on the lap."

The McLarens used a one-stop strategy to consolidate their advantage and finished the race around a minute clear of Schumacher.

"That was the best we could hope for," said the German, "but Ferrari has more developments for the Argentine Grand Prix [on April 12], when I hope to give these guys a bit of a chase."

The day's most outstanding piece of driving, though, came when Benetton's Alexander Wurtz, in only his fifth grand prix, audaciously outbraked Frentzen into the tight left-hander after the pits. The Austrian's performance was a breath of fresh air and he thoroughly deserved fourth place, ahead of Frentzen and Benetton team-mate Giancarlo Fisichella.

For the Jordan team, the Brazilian race was a major disappointment. Ralf Schumacher flew off on the third corner and Damon Hill struggled home 10th, two laps behind the winner. When Hill was excluded subsequently from the official results because his car failed the post-race weigh-in, the former world champion's day of misery was complete.

McLaren's domination of this second round of the championship without the benefit of their controversial secondary braking system was the best response imaginable after days of behind-the-scenes wrangling that began when Ferrari protested against the McLaren-Mercedes system.

The protests were upheld — which flew in the face of opinions offered by the FIA technical delegate Charlie Whiting, who had consistently told McLaren that he believed the system to be legal. The official view was that the main purpose of the system was steering rather than braking.

The Guardian Weekly

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Palestinians set fire to a US flag during a Hamas demonstration in Hebron last week PHOTO: RICK BOWMER

Hamas feud 'killed master bomber'

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

A DEADLY power struggle inside the military wing of the militant Islamist party Hamas claimed the life of its chief bomb-maker last week, Palestinian security forces declared on Monday, clearing Israel of involvement.

Five Hamas activists are under arrest but the ringleader of the group that killed Muhi al-Din Sharif — the man known as Engineer Two who is alleged to be responsible for the deaths of 78 Israelis — is still at large, according to Palestinian officials.

Sharif had apparently tried to take control of Izzedine al Qassam, Hamas's military wing, but met with resistance from those who disagreed with him over tactics and financing. Last year Israeli briefings claimed he was training recruits to attack Palestinian Authority targets, including its leader, Yasser Arafat.

The Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, said the news was "a positive development" which showed that the Palestinian Authority could fight terror "when it wants to".

Hamas rejected the Palestinian report as lies and pledged that Sharif's blood would not have been spilt in vain — suggesting it is still planning revenge attacks in Israel. Security in public areas has been stepped up.

Since Sharif's scorched body was found next to an exploded car bomb in the Palestinian-controlled West Bank town of Ramallah, there have been many conflicting accounts of his death. Israel maintained from the start that it was not involved and sent envoys to Gaza to try to convince Mr Arafat.

Last week the Palestinian legislative council blamed Israel for "this criminal act", but on Monday a Palestinian official, Nabil Shaath, said a Palestinian investigation showed conclusively that Hamas members had murdered Sharif. The Palestinian authorities had identified the murderer, the weapon and the murderer's accomplices, he said. "I can now say Israel was not responsible for this operation."

The investigation unearthed large quantities of weapons, explosives and time bombs in the Ramallah area. One of the men under arrest reportedly confessed that he had prepared the bomb that blew up the car to make it appear that Sharif had died accidentally while preparing a bomb. A post mortem identified the cause of death as gunshots to the chest.

Sharif, aged 32, headed Israel's most-wanted list as the mastermind of several suicide bombings, most recently last summer's attacks in central Jerusalem.

Comment, page 12

Britain and France ratify nuclear test ban

Richard Norton-Taylor

BRITAIN and France on Monday became the first nuclear weapons states to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, as Pakistan announced that it had successfully test-fired a long-range missile.

The move by Britain and France was a symbolic gesture to encourage others, notably "nuclear threshold" countries such as Pakistan and India, to follow suit.

The UK Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said it signalled Britain's commitment to "the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world". But analysts said it was unlikely to make much of an impression.

Though President Clinton is pressing for early ratification by the United States, Republicans in the US Senate are hostile. And although the treaty bans all tests that use fissionable material, it does not prohibit "sub-explosive" tests or laboratory experiments. Results of such tests carried out by the US are being passed on to Britain and France.

The treaty does not prevent nuclear states from developing existing weapons into more sophisticated systems. The US recently completed trials for a deep-penetration nuclear weapon, the B61-11, which is designed for attacks against underground targets such as suspected nuclear, chemical and biological warfare sites.

The treaty, which was signed in 1996, has to be ratified by 44 "named" countries — states with a civil nuclear power industry — before coming into force. India and Pakistan have signed neither the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty nor the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Pakistan's test of its longest range 1,500 km missile drew a rebuke on Monday from Washington. "The United States regrets this missile test and calls on both Pakistan and India to exercise restraint," a US state department spokesman said.

Comment, page 12

Papon guilt exposes France's 'false truths'

Jon Henley in Bordeaux

TO MANY Jews, it was not enough. To most of the French, it was a long-awaited condemnation of a period in their history that they have long preferred to ignore. To Maurice Papon, convicted of complicity in crimes against humanity 17 years after his role in the mass deportation of Jews was first revealed, the 10-year prison sentence he received last week was a travesty of justice.

The jury, which took nearly 19 hours to reach its decision after the longest trial in French history, found the 87-year-old former civil servant guilty of organising the arrest and detention of Jews during the second world war. But it absolved him of complicity in their murder, accepting his defence that he had not been aware of the Nazi programme of mass extermination.

"Society expected a whole regime to be put on trial," the historian Denis Peschanski said. "The problem is that this verdict is about the responsibility of an individual involved in the criminal acts of a regime."

The writer Marek Halter said: "The world is judging criminals in Bosnia and Rwanda. Can they now be sentenced to more than 10 years, since Maurice Papon, who participated actively or passively in the worst massacre in the history of humanity, only got 10 years?"

Françoise Pasteur, who lost seven relatives in the gas chambers, said the conviction was a lesson for the future. "Now the young people will know. They'll know even a high and mighty man is not immune."

But Jean Kahn, head of France's central Jewish religious authority, the Israelite Consistory, said Papon had deserved "the exemplary punishment" of life imprisonment for not disobeying immoral orders.

And the Crif, an umbrella group of Jewish associations, said that while the verdict showed the Vichy regime was guilty of deporting Jews to Nazi concentration camps, the sentence left a bitter taste. "The lukewarm punishment can only be explained by personal factors, like the defendant's age, his grief, or the state of his health," it said.

Papon, who is in poor health and recently lost his wife of 66 years to cancer, sat motionless as the verdict was read out. The sentence was less than the 20 years the public prosecutor had asked for, but the jury of three judges and nine civilians also stripped Papon of his civic rights for 10 years.

"He's become a non-person," Ms Pasteur said. "That's what gives me the most satisfaction. For a man who was so respected, so powerful, this is the ultimate humiliation. He may not serve a day of his prison sentence, but for me this is enough."

A well-regarded civil servant who rose to become Paris police chief and budget minister after the war, Papon will not go to prison until all his appeals are exhausted, which could take years. His lawyer, Jean-Marc Varaut, promised to take the case to France's highest court and if necessary to the European Court of Human Rights. "This has not finished," he said on the courthouse steps. "I think the jury was afraid of public opinion."

Papon, the most senior civil servant of the collaborationist Vichy regime to stand trial, was charged with ordering the arrests and deportation of 1,690 Jews — including 233 children — from the Bordeaux region, where he was wartime deputy prefect and head of the Jewish Affairs service. He argued that he was not helping the Nazis, and that he owed it to France to stay on in his post rather than resign. He also insisted that he knew nothing of Hitler's "Final Solution" for Jews.

The case came to light in 1981, but a succession of governments blocked his prosecution until last October. To many in France and outside, it was a litmus test of the country's capacity to acknowledge its collaboration with the Nazis and its complicity in sending 76,000 French Jews to the death camps.

To Alain Jakubowicz, a lawyer for Holocaust survivors and relatives, the court ducked its responsibility by not handing down a life sentence. But, he said, "a page has turned in the history of our country".

He added: "We will no longer look at this period in the way we have, as a time when all Frenchmen were heroes. Those who wanted to oppose the truth, by fabricating a false truth, have been defeated."

Le Monde, page 13

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

The problems of too much well-oiled living

IN DISPARAGING Colin J Campbell's warning that the world is on the eve of an historic discontinuity because it is running out of the abundant cheap oil on which it has come to depend, George F Will writes: "The task of finding the gloomy dimension of declining oil prices is testing the ingenuity of the Cassandra class" (Scraping the bottom of the barrel, March 29).

Nonsense. The gloom is pervasive, although perhaps too much well-oiled living has rendered Will's vision insensitive to it. Declining oil prices will prompt higher oil consumption worldwide. This will result in more driving, accompanied by higher levels of acid rain, smog, road accidents, injuries and premature deaths. There will also be a rise in the consumption of plastics and other petrochemical products. Unless current methods of making, using and disposing of these products are modified, the net effect will be to release more toxic substances into the environment. Also, extracting and transporting the extra oil will probably cause more spills, controlling reserves may involve more wars, and burning the extra oil is sure to strengthen the greenhouse effect.

Will waxes lyrical about the United States having the world's "largest supply" of freedom, but ignores the fact that in practice millions of Americans no longer have the freedom not to drive nor to breathe clean air.

Worse, Will demonstrates scant comprehension of the degree to which global civilisation is dependent on oil, and of the dilemma that this puts us in: we can keep being profligate with oil until we poison or broil ourselves to death, or until we run out and face famine. Avoiding either scenario is possible, but it will require more than freedom and scientific creativity.

In referring to those who don't share his glib optimism as "the Cassandra class", Will exposes the hollowness of his musings. The Cassandra of Greek myth received the gift of true prophecy from Apollo — who also decreed that she would not be believed. It doesn't take a prophet to foretell that our love affair with petroleum will end in tears, but true ingenuity is required to maintain the degree of selective ignorance and myopia that allows Will to take such a rosy view of what has become a singularly harmful culture of dependence.
Tim Groves,
Kyoto, Japan

States of the Union

CYPRUS clearly cannot be considered for European Union membership while the present situation remains (Cook's fudge keeps irate partners sweet, March 22). It is a ludicrous pretence that the Greek Cypriot Republic of Cyprus represents the Turkish Cypriot community, or the island as a whole.

The independent, multi-cultural Republic of Cyprus was overthrown by the Greek colonels in the coup of 1974. Britain, as guarantor of Cyprus's independent status along with Greece and Turkey, chose to do nothing, despite having two huge military bases and thousands of troops on the spot. Turkey had no option but to act to safeguard the Turkish Cypriot population on the island, since Nicos Sampson, who had overthrown the government of Archbishop Makarios, was committed to union with Greece, which would have meant ethnic cleansing of the Turkish Cypriot population. It is clear that by its inaction Britain, and probably Nato, were happy to conspire in this plot to get rid of Makarios, who was considered pro-Soviet.

The domestic political situation in Cyprus must be stabilised. This means one of three options: a federal Cypriot republic with autonomous Greek and Turkish states; universal recognition of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus as an equal, legitimate entity alongside the Greek Republic of Cyprus; or union of the Greek Cypriot Republic with Greece and integration of the northern Turkish Cypriot Republic with Turkey. Any of these options is preferable to the status quo.
John Papantoniou,
London

THE Guardian Weekly seems to be in favour of eventual Turkish membership of the EU (Editorial, March 22). But that would mean a common frontier with unstable countries such as Iraq, Iran, Armenia, Georgia and Syria. Who needs that? The EU's southeastern border would become much more difficult to defend, expanding from a couple of hundred kilometres in Thrace to about 1,500km in Asia Minor.

General Wesley Clark, secretary-general Javier Solana and other Nato officials have recently been in Austria trying to persuade that country to apply for Nato membership, in spite of Austria's promise in 1955 to stay neutral. In a speech to the Institute for Political and Strategic Studies in Vienna, Gen Clark said that "we see increasing challenges to security in Europe in the southeast". So let us keep our southeastern border short in Europe rather than long in Asia.
Michael Grut,
London

Rich pickings for big business

GEORGE MONBIOT'S article "Give us this day our toxic bread" (March 22) dealt with the proposed ruling by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) over the definition of "organic" foods. Monbiot tells us that the new definition of "organic foods" would include foods that are anything but.

It may be true, as Monbiot contends, that the USDA is acting on behalf of large producers who do not wish to lose any share of their market, rather than on behalf of the public. While citizens of the US have ways to make their influence felt on the municipal and state level, the federal government is pretty well in the hands of pressure groups, substantially beyond the reach of the public.

An excellent example is the overwhelming desire of voters to reform the campaign financing system. This "system" now requires millions of television advertising dollars to be raised for election to the House of Representatives and many more millions for the election of a senator or the president. There is no evidence that there will be any kind of reform, but each political party will blame the other for doing nothing.

It is certainly worthwhile to publicise as widely as possible the failure of the USDA to do its duty, but it is unlikely to bring results.

It would be better if the various organisations of farmers and consumers could agree on reasonable standards. As soon as this is accomplished, an attractive logo could be chosen and registered as a "servicemark" (similar to a trademark) in every country where the new association of organic farmers and consumers is active. After a while consumers will look for the logo and the word "organic" will have the same status as "new" or "improved" in adverts.
John Lehnert,
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

AGRIBUSINESS in the US must be feeling very threatened by the organic food industry if it is taking such desperate measures to strangle it. The strategy seems to be: "Let's kill off those competitors who don't follow our destructive farming practices or buy our fertilisers, pesticides etc, and suppress public debate because we want to be allowed to continue to get rich by poisoning the soil, water and wildlife."

Even though the organic industry is growing rapidly as more people take responsibility for their own health and that of the planet, the USDA is blatantly going against these positive steps to more sustainable living by supporting the recent despotic actions of big business.

It is time for the world to stand up to the US and boycott the genetically engineered food that America will be allowed to label as "organic" in the future, if the USDA has its way. Otherwise, what good is "free speech" and "free trade" if we aren't even allowed to choose what food to eat?
Gaenor McAlister,
Sydney, NSW, Australia

Slicing up trade with Africa

WHILE Bill Clinton calls the shots on his African trade tour, Nelson Mandela has the insight to expose the United States as an ill-disguised capitalist opportunist (Africa markets shape Clinton itinerary, March 22). Thousands of people die miserable deaths every year from extreme poverty in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa, according to Unicef, only about half the population has access to the most basic needs, such as clean water.

Promoting the adoption of Western capitalism and "trade not aid" as a solution to poverty is more likely to perpetuate historical exploitation and generation of profits for the few (the few, as usual, being US business). Self-sufficiency is the key to Africa's future, but it is support for education and initiatives such as microcredit financing that will enable Africans to turn their own lives around and raise their standard of living without being taken advantage of.
Karen Hodgson,
Victoria, BC, Canada

LOOKING at the photo of President Clinton behind bars alongside President Mandela (April 5), do you think Mr Clinton was acquiring a few tips in case his own home-grown problems go pear-shaped?
Stephen Brooks,
London

Briefly

FOR how much longer can the rest of the world stand by while year after year many thousands of people are murdered in the United States as a result of the lax gun laws and the culture of violence that exists in that country (Held to ransom by the gun lobby, April 5)?

It is becoming accepted that the rest of the world has a right to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation when massacres are taking place. Is it not time for a delegation from the European Union to visit the US for discussions at government level on how to tackle the problem? Perhaps the matter should be raised in the United Nations General Assembly and a resolution passed calling on Washington to take action to stamp out this crime against humanity.
Terry Jones,
Thurso, Caithness

BILL CLINTON asks if there are common elements between Jonesboro and other US school shootings. Yes, Mr President. Guns.
Simon Boyd,
Cambridge

IN VIEW of the fact that it has become almost customary in recent times for world leaders to apologise for past wrongs, when can we expect to hear an apology from someone for dispossessing the Palestinians?
B Black,
Auckland, New Zealand

JOHN RYLE'S piece (March 29) calls to mind a statement by Vaclav Havel when he was guest of honour at the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York, just a few weeks after he became president of Czechoslovakia in January 1990.

Mr Havel, a playwright by profession, had spent some of his most creative years in prison. According to Lewis Lapham of Harper's Magazine, Mr Havel did not give a speech. He explained that because he hadn't spent the afternoon in prison, he hadn't had time to compose his thoughts.
Philip Shano,
Guelph, Ontario, Canada

UNTIL we manage to solve the problem of non-gender specific singular personal pronouns, may I suggest to your leader writer (March 22) the policy of consciously using plural subjects — people, human beings, instead of a person or one — in sentences that do not refer to identifiable individuals. The resulting construction not only avoids sexism, it strikes a blow, however modest, against the rampant individualism of our culture.
J E Tiles,
Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

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Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.
Fax: 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0985).
e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk
Subscription, change of address and e-mail inquiries to: gwsubs@guardian.co.uk

Mandela's army chief forced out

David Beresford in Johannesburg

THE head of the South African National Defence Force, General Georg Meiring, was forced into early retirement this week after a botched attempt by military intelligence to frame public figures on treason charges.

Gen Meiring said he was retiring in an attempt to "restore trust" in the military. Several other senior officers were expected to be cashiered with him.

The military had tried to implicate a number of well-known figures in a plot to stage a coup, among them Winnie Mandela; the deputy minister of defence, Ronnie Kasrils; the former leader of the Transkei, General Bantu Holomisa; and the diplomat Robert McBride.

Gen Meiring's likely successor as military commander, Lieutenant General Siphiwe Nyanda, had been identified as the leader of the bogus conspiracy.

"I have, after due consideration of all the facts . . . decided that it would be in the best interests of the Sandf if I would ask the president to suspend my contract and allow me to retire on early pension without prejudice," Gen Meiring said.

He confirmed that his decision stemmed from an intelligence report that had falsely claimed there was a plot to overthrow President Nelson Mandela's government, saying: "My position of trust has been unsettled by the report, which leaves me no choice but to come to this decision." He said he would retire with effect from the end of May — nearly a year early.

A statement from the presidency said that Gen Meiring's retirement had been accepted "with regret", and that the cabinet would decide on his successor. President Mandela was quoted as saying the decision was "appropriate" and "honourable".

The announcement brings to an end one of the more bizarre episodes in South Africa's post-apartheid history. It began last month with the arrest in Mozambique of Mr McBride, the head of the Southeast Asia desk in the department of foreign affairs, on gun-running charges. His detention led to a frenzy of press speculation, with claims that he was smuggling arms for the IRA, for rebels in East Timor or for a coup attempt in South Africa.

The speculation was fed by elements of military intelligence, who leaked details from an intelligence report claiming that Mr McBride had been under surveillance on suspicion of treason.

Mr Mandela moved to defuse what was developing into a power struggle within the defence establishment by appointing a judicial tribunal under the chief justice, Ismail Mahomed, to investigate the veracity of the intelligence report and the circumstances in which it had been brought to his attention.

The judges found the report was "without substance", that it was based on allegations from a single, unreliable source — a former security force spy arrested with Mr McBride in Mozambique — and that normal safeguards regarding its veracity had been circumvented when it had been presented to the president.

EU and UN plan joint aid strategy

Martin Walker in Brussels

THE bulk of the world's budget for development aid, and 95 per cent of the aid for Africa, is to be organised by a single body that will promote private enterprise, human rights and democracy.

The strategy emerged after the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union on Monday agreed to establish a joint steering group for their $11 billion aid programmes.

This follows a similar agreement between the EU and the World Bank, and leaves only the shrinking United States and Japanese aid budgets as major donors outside the joint strategy.

With an aid budget of $8.3 billion, the EU is by far the world's most generous donor. The UNDP has a smaller budget of $2.7 billion. But the political effect of the UN's backing for the strategy is important because the UN has traditionally given developing countries a greater say in its programmes.

"There is a much stronger consensus about the main priorities and pre-conditions for development than there ever has been," the UNDP's chief administrator, James Speth, said. "We all agree on the right policies, on the need for developing countries to access the benefits of an increasingly globalised market place, and we all know that you can't get development by economic growth alone. And I stress that this consensus is not simply among the donor community. It has also been forged with great care and some difficulty to include the developing countries."

The idea of co-ordinating development budgets is not new. But attempts to achieve it have proved disappointing, as many donor countries see their aid programmes as ways to increase their national exports or political influence.

The EU and UN said other big aid donors, such as the US, were welcome to join.

● The EU promised to help Asia overcome its financial crisis at the second Asia-Europe conference in London. Twenty-five leaders from the two continents promised to work together to support economic reforms in Asia and resist protectionist pressure.



A Khmer Rouge defector armed with rocket-propelled grenades keeps watch at the site of a helicopter crash near the remote base of Perah Vihear, Cambodia. Khmer Rouge remnants retook the town of Anlong Veng last week, but the movement's demise seems certain. *Le Monde, page 13* PHOTO: OU NEAKRY

Ukraine voters yearn for Soviet days

James Meek in Moscow

THE Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuchma, insisted last week that he would continue market reforms despite a strong vote for Communists and their socialist allies in parliamentary elections which left them just short of an absolute majority.

One pro-government newspaper in Kiev headlined its report "Red Dawn?" after 38 million voters, oppressed by poverty, corruption and a wages crisis in which workers are owed $3 billion in back-pay, gave the four leftwing parties an overall 42 per cent of the vote.

The lion's share, 26 per cent, went to the Communists, who oppose privatisation, the sale of land and Ukraine's increasingly close relationship with the West. They believe in a planned economy, regret the break-up of the Soviet Union and want closer ties with their fellow ex-Soviet East Slavs in neighbouring Russia and Belarus.

Despite the left's triumph, effectively a shout of anger from the electorate at the failure of seven years of economic decline and half-hearted reform under Mr Kuchma and his predecessor, Leonid Kravchuk, the president said there would be no return to Soviet economic methods.

The Communists and two smaller socialist parties looked likely to pick up around 190 seats in the 450-seat legislature, the Verkhovna Rada.

Mr Kuchma's hopes of getting any reformist legislation through the Rada rest on a wedge of smaller nationalist, pro-government and centrist parties and 114 non-aligned "independents", many of whom are businessmen.

Petro Symonenko, the Communist leader, said he wanted radical changes to Ukraine's new constitution, to abolish the presidency and to let the biggest party in parliament form the government. He called for "rapprochement" with Russia and Belarus.

His success was welcomed by the Russian Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov, who dreams of reuniting the East Slavs as a prelude to recreating the Soviet Union. "In Russia, people are increasingly disappointed in democratic parties and movements. The same process is under way in Ukraine," he said.

The election was a disaster for Ukrainian nationalists and centrists, who went to the polls fragmented into dozens of parties. The nationalist standard bearer, Rukh, scraped into second place with less than 9 per cent of the vote and was beaten by Communists in some of its old Kiev strongholds.

Millions of Ukrainians died as a result of the Russian civil war, forced collectivisation and state-inspired famine. Yet the left's electorate sees in the Communists not the Bolshevik ideologues of Lenin's time or Stalin's butchers but the meagre certainties of the three decades when the Soviet Union was ruled by Ukrainians: Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev.

Mr Kuchma, a former missile factory boss from Brezhnev's home town of Dnepropetrovsk, has won democratic credentials and delayed reform since election in 1994 by trying to work with parliament rather than without it, as other post-Soviet leaders, in Russia and Central Asia, have done.

From the perspective of the early 1990s, when the country was gripped by hyper-inflation and its very survival seemed in doubt, today's stable currency and calm, generally free democratic processes are striking achievements. But liberals, pro-marketeers and foreign investors have become as disenchanted as Ukraine's Communists, pensioners and unpaid workers, with Mr Kuchma's hesitancy over reform.

Shortly before the election the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank suspended huge loan programmes, accusing Mr Kuchma's government of bad faith.

The Week

PRESIDENT CLINTON urged the government of Japan to take bold action to overcome civil service resistance to the economic reforms that could drag the country out of financial crisis.
Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 16

SIXTY-THREE miners were killed and 45 injured in a methane gas explosion and fire at the Skachinskoho mine in Donetsk, Ukraine.

THE United States envoy Richard Holbrooke left Cyprus after separate talks with Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders failed to achieve a breakthrough in his attempt to reunify the island.

PAULA JONES'S sexual harassment lawsuit against President Clinton was thrown out by an Arkansas judge after she ruled that the evidence submitted was insufficient for a claim of criminal sexual assault.
Washington Diary, page 6

ROBERT KOCHARYAN, an uncompromising Armenian nationalist, won the second round of the country's presidential elections, dealing a blow to the prospects of a peaceful resolution to the 10-year conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

DENMARK'S supreme court threw out a challenge to the legality of the European Union's Maastricht treaty. Eurosceptics had argued that the treaty was a threat to national sovereignty.

HEAVY rain has extinguished more than 95 per cent of the fires that have devastated vast areas of savannah and jungle in Brazil's northern Amazon.

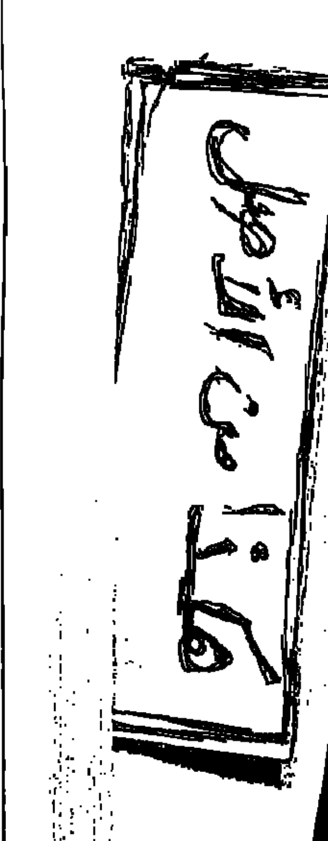
CHINA has agreed to allow European Union envoys to spend a week in Tibet looking at the human rights situation.

GOCHA ESEBUA, who kidnapped several UN soldiers and was also suspected of an attack on the Georgian president, Eduard Shevardnadze, was killed in a shoot-out with government forces.

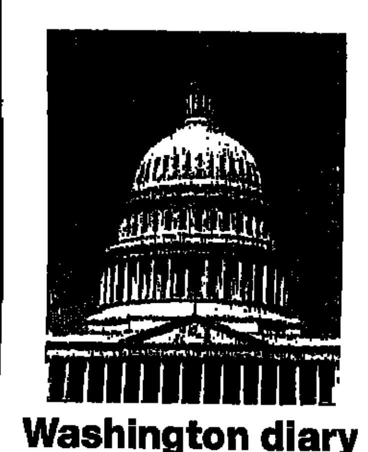
THE United States government announced a ban on the import of more than 50 types of semi-automatic assault weapons, such as the AK-47 and the Uzi.

ANDREI KLIMENTIEV, a twice-convicted businessman who was last week elected mayor of Russia's third city, Nizhny Novgorod, has been arrested for embezzlement. The election was declared void.
Le Monde, page 13

TAMMY WYNETTE, the singer from the Alabama cotton fields who became one of the great figures of country music, has died, aged 55.



Clinton outruns Republican posse



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

WHEN Judge Susan Webber Wright threw out Paula Jones's sexual harassment lawsuit against Bill Clinton last week, the Republican leader in the Senate, Mississippi's Trent Lott stressed that the dismissal of the civil suit did not necessarily affect criminal investigations by the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr. But he sounded wearily resigned to the fate that now confronts his party in Congress.

In the next few months Starr will report to Congress that he believes there is a case for Clinton to answer on three counts: that he was involved in suborning perjury in the now defunct Jones case; that he was involved in attempts to intimidate witnesses; and that he lied under oath when he gave his deposition to Jones's lawyers.

When that happens, the House of Representatives will have to decide how to handle the issue. Last month Lott was one of the first senior Republicans to urge Starr to get a move on with his increasingly unpopular and problematic investigations. Lott was also one of the first to speculate that Congress, faced with possible impeachment proceedings, might decide to ditch responsibility and instead confine itself to a motion of censure on Clinton.

Yet within 24 hours of those comments Lott was forced to backtrack. For the past few weeks he has adopted a much more uncompromising anti-Clinton stance. But last week he could only respond: "As there have been so many pieces of bad news and his poll numbers went up, since this appears to be good news for the president, I presume the political numbers will go down."

Lott's remarks show someone floundering wildly in the face of events that threaten to overwhelm his party. Initially, the Clinton scandals caused many Republicans to rub their hands in glee. Now, with the November 1998 mid-term elections imminent, intelligent Republicans are increasingly dismayed at their possible vulnerability in the face of a series of events that some once saw as a great opportunity.

The truth, as Lott's uncertain direction of the issue has exposed, is that Starr's investigations have become identified in the public mind as partisan and petty. Having applauded when Starr first embarrassed the president, Republicans now realise that if they fail to handle his report with skill, it could backfire against them.

The danger was brought home last week by no less an anti-Clinton strategist than the former head of the Christian Coalition, Ralph Reed. He said that Judge Wright's decision demonstrated the pitfalls of Republican reliance on scandals to "weaken the administration and bolster Republicans". The problem was "you end up turning your party's political destiny into someone's hand other than your own". He added: "If these scandals don't pan out, you are weakened by comparison."

Technically, the issue for Republicans currently turns on whether Starr's investigations should be turned over to the House judiciary committee — the procedurally correct option — or whether they should be considered by a more *ad hoc* Congressional body, such as a select committee. Should there be fresh hearings — involving all the usual suspects in the Monica Lewinsky, Jones and Kathleen Willey affairs? And if so, who should conduct them?

This issue has been vigorously, but discreetly, argued in the corridors of Washington over the past few weeks, with Lott and the House Speaker, Newt Gingrich, mostly pressing for the ad hoc solution as a means of distancing the Republican congressional majority from any impeachment momentum.

Gingrich, who harbours dreams of the Republican presidential nomination in 2000, has consistently taken the lead in trying to orchestrate a coherent Republican response to the president's travails and the prospect of impeachment hearings. His idea of an ad hoc committee remains in play as a possibility. But Gingrich, who has cut an equally unconvincing figure in the crisis that now threatens to engulf his party, has also told colleagues that he desperately needs sound advice about procedural options.

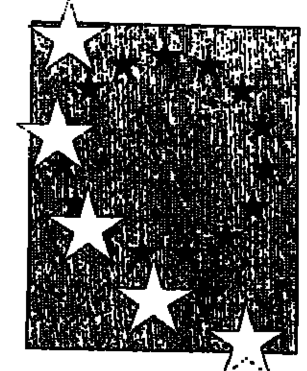
For the political truth remains that Clinton stands to benefit from a bungled Congressional investigation. Even if Lott and Gingrich get it right and choose the least contentious or partisan approach to Starr's report, they will still be attacked as vindictive and unpatriotic by the White House. And if they fail to drive Clinton from office when they have the opportunity, they will be attacked as incompetent by their own hardline supporters.

At the beginning of the year no analysis of the political battlefield could have seriously contemplated the possibility that the Democrats would regain control of Congress in November. But that possibility is now taken more seriously. A survey by the Pew Institute showed last week that the Democrats had a 13 point national lead over the Republicans and stated that the parties' respective standings had been directly affected by the swing to Clinton following the scandals.

To apply national opinion polls to local contests in the United States is a mug's game, and the likelihood that the Republicans will hold on is still strong. But a real contest is now in prospect. The stakes are huge for Clinton. But they are almost as great for Lott and Gingrich, who must make political judgments now about the Starr report that will shape US politics for years to come.

Washington Post, page 15

Growing pains grip architects of new Europe



Europe this week

Martin Walker

THE MOST startling feature of last week's ceremonies of enlargement for the European Union should have come as no surprise. The current process of managing a club of 15 nations is already unwieldy. The formal opening of occasions at which 26 nations will routinely sit around a table and discuss matters of common interest gave a warning that Europe's management is proceeding towards something uncomfortably close to farce.

Take 26 nations, each represented by a prime minister. Give each one five minutes to make opening remarks. (And each country's press office will ensure that the press corps will want to record each word to be relayed to the voters back home.) That takes at least two hours.

But the chairman, representing the country currently holding the six-month term of presidency, will need 15 minutes for an opening statement and description of the agenda, and 30 seconds to say thanks to each speaker and to introduce the next one. The chairman will want his place in the sun, and with 26 EU members it will be 13 years before his country has a turn at the chair again.

Such a session will last for almost three hours. Break for lunch. Do it again. Break for dinner, and these busy people must then go home.

The EU has known that this problem of organisation was looming. The Inter-Governmental Conference that preceded the Amsterdam treaty was supposed to devise institutional reforms that would allow the efficient management of an enlarging Europe. It came up with recommendations on majority voting, and on re-weighting the votes of each member state so that a big player such as Britain (nearly 60 million people) gets 10 votes and tiny Luxembourg (with fewer than 500,000) gets just two. It tried to simplify and to accelerate decision-making, which proved hard to reconcile with the parallel need to give the European Parliament a greater say.

But overall, the IGC and the Amsterdam treaty process failed to solve the problem. It was left for the future, for another IGC process before the next enlargement, and for a constitutional convention once the number of EU members exceeds 20. That was a cunning ploy. The 15 current members have now begun formal accession negotiations with six new countries, and the goal is to bring them all in during the next decade. That would make 21.

But one of them is Cyprus, which could face a long delay as the EU's problems with Turkey have not been solved and nobody — except Greece — really wants Cyprus in the Union until the questions of the island's division are resolved. So the threshold level of 20 members may not be breached, and the constitutional convention not required, for some years.

Is this good or bad? For a passionate Euro-federalist it is a great disappointment. It means that there will still be no clear governing body of and for Europe. For those Europeans in the tradition of De Gaulle and Margaret Thatcher, who want an economically prosperous confederation of nation states, the current situation is tolerable. They can usually get deals where they need them and block decisions that they oppose.

But the current situation cannot and will not last. Europe currently is governed by a pale imitation of the United States Constitution, in which the legislature (the European Parliament), the judiciary (the European Court of Justice) and the executive (the European Commission) are defined and separate. But on to these weak bodies, with firmly circumscribed powers, has been grafted the Council of Europe, where the individual governments of the 15 nation states run the show. The Council is most vulnerable to the complicating effects of enlargement.

Just look at the Common Agricultural Policy, long the most ludicrous product of Euro-bargaining. The CAP is the kind of farm and food policy you are likely to get from a Council of 15 nation states with different climates, crops, appetites and rural voting strengths. It has only ever tried to reform itself under irresistible pressure from the outside, — the US and most of the rest of the world demanded a phasing-out of the EU's export subsidies as the price of agreeing the Uruguay Round of the Gatt world trade talks.

But the CAP, which still takes up almost half of the EU budget, is another of the European institutions that faces problems through enlargement. The current system cannot afford to treat the farmers of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia (only the first wave of new entrants) in the same way that it treats the farmers of the current members.

The question is how to reform it. Furious Irish, German and Italian farmers took to the streets of Brussels last week to demonstrate against the commission's modest proposals. The Irish alone claim that they would lose $420 million or more than $1.50 a week for every man, woman and child in the country, and are threatening a veto.

But bear in mind the other revolution that is about to hit Europe: the single currency. From January 1, 1999, the monetary policy of 11 EU members will be taken out of the hands of the member states and entrusted to a group of unelected central bankers. Once the power to set interest rates is removed from nation states, their power to define their own economic policies, or even their own tax structures, will go into terminal decline.

The new European Central Bank is the route through which federalism will come, and by which the arguments of ministers from 15, 20, or eventually 26, member states gathered together in the Council will become increasingly petty. Until that is, the big day when the Council finds itself at loggerheads with the central bankers.

New Zealand balks at moral crusade

With a code of conduct for parents and talk of reviving religious teaching, the country's first woman PM has sparked controversy. **Anthony Hubbard** reports

NEW ZEALAND'S first woman prime minister has launched a family values campaign and questioned the country's long-standing ban on religious teaching in state schools. Jenny Shipley, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, has thereby issued an astonishing challenge to a deeply secular nation wary of political debates about personal values.

Ms Shipley's coalition government has sent to every household a "Code of Social and Family Responsibility", which suggests, among other things, that parents have a duty to love their children. Notions such as these have rarely been sighted in official documents before, and the result has been a fierce debate.

And the prime minister has now gone even further. In a recent speech she suggested that secular education may be an idea whose time has passed. Why, she asked, shouldn't schools be able to teach spiritual and religious values?

Ms Shipley castigated "politically correct" teachers who bent over backwards to ban religion from the classroom. She cited an incident in 1996, when kindergarten teachers in Wellington allegedly removed the crosses from Easter hot cross buns before serving them to the children.

Stories such as these, she said, "just destroy many people's confidence in the good judgment of those who influence our next generation".



Shipley: has upset secular nation

Ms Shipley, who last year deposed the previous prime minister, Jim Bolger, in a caucus coup, has put a unique stamp on her conservative administration. She was elected in part because her National party colleagues were concerned about policy drift under Mr Bolger and a public perception that the party was unduly influenced by the New Zealand First party (NZF), the junior coalition partner.

Her boldness has so far paid off — National's ratings have risen in the polls and her personal popularity is high. National was expected easily to win the byelection next month in Mr Bolger's constituency. (He is leaving to be ambassador in Washington.)

How long the honeymoon will last is hard to say. Ms Shipley herself has acknowledged that her stance is risky but, characteristically, she refuses to soft-pedal.

The controversial Code Of Responsibility was first mooted by Winston Peters, the senior finance minister and a populist who leads the profoundly unpopular NZF. Mr Peters aimed the code initially at welfare beneficiaries who, he says, were abusing the system and not facing up to their responsibilities. Those who depend on the state, he says, must do their bit by looking for work and caring for their children. Now the government has extended the code to cover all families.

The high moral tone of the document has drawn allegations of official hypocrisy. The leader of the opposition Labour party, Helen Clarke, argued that the government had little right to wag its finger at parents when Cabinet ministers themselves fail to observe the code. Ms Clarke even took the risky step of singling out a National minister, whose son had crashed a government car and run away, and a NZF minister whose son had been arrested for possessing cannabis.

Attacks on the personal lives of political opponents are very rare in New Zealand. There is a kind of unwritten rule that politicians' private lives are private business. Ms Clarke herself said that in general she strongly supports that approach, but argued that in this case the government has brought it upon itself through its own hypocrisy. Her attack proved unpopular, however, and has not been repeated.

Opposition to the code is widespread but by no means universal. New Zealand has a deep Puritan tradition and Ms Shipley has tapped into it. Her Puritanism, moreover, is an updated one, modified for the nineties. The code says nothing about divorce, for instance, but merely insists that separated parents have responsibilities for their children. Her cabinet includes a number of separated parents, including Mr Peters.

And Ms Shipley is liberal on matters of sexual behaviour. In an unexpected move for the leader of a conservative party, she made a great show of attending Auckland's Hero parade, a flamboyant display of gay pride.

Moreover, in talking about a possible return of religious teaching in schools, she is not taking a narrow sectarian view. The vicar may be able to visit the school, she suggests, but so would leaders from Buddhist or other faiths.

She is undoubtedly however, cutting across a strong cultural grain, and the saw could turn in her hands. Critics have already pointed out that the infamous hot cross buns story, for instance is nothing but an urban myth. In fact, the kindergarten teachers served up the buns with the crosses intact, and the newspaper that got the story wrong had to apologise for it.

Moral crusaders, however, are rarely stopped by quibbles about mere facts.

Different strokes, page 19

Teachers vote to act against red tape

Vivek Chaudhary

BRITAIN'S two biggest teaching unions have voted for industrial action over the amount of paperwork that teachers are expected to complete. In a National Union of Teachers (NUT) ballot, 93 per cent of members who voted supported industrial action. The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers also voted in favour of action. It could put the profession on a collision course with the Government.

The annual conference of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) this week was also expected to hear calls for a ballot on excessive paperwork. The ATL is issuing its members with a questionnaire about bureaucracy and has pledged to back industrial action if members feel there is too much.

Doug McAvoy, the NUT general secretary, said the 28 per cent turnout for his union's ballot was low, but that the burden of paperwork could only be reduced by giving schools more resources. Mr McAvoy has already called on the Government to issue directives to local education authorities and head teachers on how to cut the workload. These are expected to be issued by September.

The ATL survey asked 13 questions about the effects of red tape on work and health. Peter Smith, general secretary of the ATL, said: "It's not just the Government which is responsible for excessive teacher workloads. The problem is, so much bureaucracy is created by local authorities and schools themselves. If school managers fail to curb [it], ATL will sanction a ballot on industrial action as a last resort."

The Government has already responded to teachers' concerns by establishing a working group on red tape in schools. But teachers' leaders complained that it failed to address the problem because its remit did not extend to schools' statutory duties. Teachers have claimed that legislation due to be passed by Parliament will lead to more paperwork, a conference of headteachers was told last week.

Meanwhile Labour MP Margaret Hodge claimed that linking teachers' pay to their pupils' academic improvement would motivate and help teachers working in schools that finish in a low league table position.

Ms Hodge also called for a raising of the entry requirements for teacher training, claiming that many colleges were happy to admit trainees with poor A level grades.

The NUT said: "A child's development depends on the work of many teachers, not solely on the efforts of one. Performance-related pay is divisive and Ms Hodge should realise the reality of teamwork in schools."



'Free Zoora Shah' demonstrators at the High Court at the start of her appeal last week PHOTO: JAMES HORTON

Abuse 'drove' Asian woman to kill

THE conviction of an Asian woman for murdering a man who had been violent to her was unsafe and should be overturned, the Court of Appeal was told last week, *writes Duncan Campbell.*

Zoora Shah, from Bradford, is appealing against her conviction for the murder by arsenic poisoning of Mohamed Azam, aged 47. She was jailed for life in 1993 at Leeds crown court with a recommendation that she serve at least 20 years.

Her counsel, Edward Fitzgerald QC, told Lord Justice Kennedy that Shah had been suffering from diminished responsibility at her trial. She had not told the full story of her treatment at the hands of Azam, a convicted drug dealer, because she did not want to bring shame on her family. She had also been suffering from a depressive illness.

Earlier, Maurice Lipsedge, consultant at Guy's Hospital and a specialist in transcultural psychiatry, explained why a woman from Shah's strict Muslim background might have felt unable to tell the truth. She had said that Azam had forced her to have sex with him in exchange for her house, and that she had had to have sex with other men.

Crown counsel Robert Smith QC said that at her trial Shah had lied and had given untrue evidence for Azam at his trial on drug offences.

Judgment will be given later this month.

Paedophiles may be jailed indefinitely

Luke Harding

THE Government said this week it was considering new laws to lock up Britain's most dangerous paedophiles indefinitely, following the furore over the release from jail of child killer Sidney Cooke.

The Home Office may give courts powers to jail child sex attackers until they die. Ministers said that the Crime and Disorder Bill, which was expected to be introduced to the House of Commons this week, would also give police the power to stop paedophiles going near places frequented by children.

Cooke, the most notorious of 150 convicted paedophiles scheduled for release over the next two years, begins a new life in a regional secure unit this week, after the authorities expressed concern about his future safety.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said: "At the moment, paedophiles can be imprisoned indefinitely only if they have committed the most appalling of offences. A new sentence would allow dangerous paedophiles to be detained indefinitely after their first offence, possibly before they inflict terrible harm."

Cooke, who has served nine years of a 16-year sentence for manslaughter, was expected to be released this week. He has agreed to be electronically tagged so police can follow his movements but, because he was sentenced before the introduction in 1992 of new curbs on released sex offenders, there are no legal powers to detain him should he choose to leave.

"He could walk out of the regional secure unit at any time," a Home Office source said. "But he is a very frightened man. He realises the public is out for him and he could face an attack."

Cooke led an east London-based paedophile ring that hired rent boys or snatched children off the street in the 1980s. Cooke was convicted of the murder of a runaway, Jason Swift, aged 14, and was also named in court as the killer of Mark Tildesley, aged seven, who was abducted from a fairground in Wokingham, Berkshire, in 1984.

Gill Mackenzie, the Chief Probation Officer for Gloucestershire, said the dilemma of what to do with infamous paedophiles "has been severely aggravated by the hysteria that is created".

"The hint and sometimes the reality of vigilantism actually increases rather than reduces the risk to the community. If we know where people are . . . then that will reduce the risk to the community. If they are driven underground and hounded from pillar to post then that has to increase the risk."

Banks enters race for mayor

John Duncan and Lucy Patton

TONY BANKS has confirmed he is ready to go up against Ken Livingstone to stand as Labour's candidate for London mayor, while Chris Smith emerged as the Cabinet's favourite candidate if Londoners vote for a mayor in next month's referendum.

Mr Banks, MP for Newham North West and sports minister, joins Mr Livingstone as the only two declared candidates for the job. Mr Banks and Mr Livingstone were the capital's favourite politicians during their time together at the Greater London Council (GLC) in the 1970s and 1980s. Mr Smith, the Culture Secretary, was reported as having the backing of senior Cabinet members.

There were reports that if Mr Smith stood with the backing of Downing Street, the transport minister, Glenda Jackson would be prepared to stand aside to prevent the vote being split. Ms Jackson was an early front-runner and her strategists are preparing to launch her campaign after the referendum. Private polls of Labour activists, however, are said to show Mr Livingstone well ahead of Ms Jackson.

Mr Banks, who joined the GLC in 1970 and was chairman in the year of its demise, was best loved for his attempt to ban the County Hall champagne bar for being élitist and for inviting Miss Whiplash to hold a book launch at the same venue.

Although Mr Livingstone is considered too leftwing for current Labour tastes, the party desperately needs a populist candidate with London credibility to take on a possible high-profile campaign by Jeffrey Archer. "I'm definitely going to go for it," said Mr Banks. "After I've seen the terms and conditions of course. I'm going to go for it, because it's a great job."

Mr Banks and Mr Livingstone are friends from the GLC days though the two have different lives outside Parliament — newts for Mr Livingstone; Chelsea Football Club for Mr Banks.

Aitken police file reviewed

David Pallister

SCOTLAND Yard has sent a report to the Crown Prosecution Service about allegations against the former Tory cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken of perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice during his failed libel trial last year.

The police file will now be reviewed by a CPS lawyer before a decision on a prosecution is reached. Perjury carries a maximum sentence of seven years.

Included in the file is an assessment of the roles played by Mr Aitken's daughter Victoria, aged 17, and his former Saudi business associate, Said Ayas, in supporting his story at the trial, which collapsed after two weeks. They signed witness statements but never gave evidence. All three were arrested and interviewed last month.

Mr Aitken had sued the Guardian and Granada's World in Action for allegations that he tried to procure women for his Arab friends; that he was dependent on the Saudi royal family; that he acted improperly as a minister for defence procurement; and that his bill for a weekend at the Paris Ritz in 1993 was paid for by Saudi friends.

After the stories appeared in April 1995 Mr Aitken, the then Chief Secretary to the Treasury, vowed to fight what he called "wicked lies".

His case finally collapsed in the High Court last June.

Tories 'hid' health costs

Michael White

MORE than £100 million in management costs were hidden within the National Health Service budget because of "perverse incentives" imposed on health managers by Tory ministers under their controversial internal market reforms, a Department of Health investigation has found.

In order to encourage the contracting out of services such as cleaning and laundry to private firms, ministers in the Thatcher/Major era ruled that the management costs of running such services should not be recorded as management costs.

That made hospitals which contracted out services look more efficient, according to a study by the NHS executive on behalf of the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson.

If the true costs of management were equalised — as they will be under new rules — the bill rises by almost £1.5 million at the Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital Trust in London, and by £1.2 million in the North Staffordshire Trust.

The health minister, Alan Milburn, said: "Everyone knows the Tories fiddled the unemployment figures. It is now clear the NHS bureaucracy figures were fiddled as well."

Officials evaluating existing definitions found that hospitals had been given "perverse incentives". For example, any trust that took the lead in seeking to co-operate with other trusts in consortiums to buy shared services had the management costs recorded against its budget.

In Brief

FROM 2000 the A level examination system will be shaken up to allow sixth form pupils to study a wider range of subjects, combining both academic and vocational qualifications.

CALLS for a review of compensation payments to the victims of crime were made following the disclosure that Josie Russell, aged 11, who survived an attack in which her mother and sister died, had been awarded £18,500 for her loss.

CAMPAIGNERS at Faslane peace camp, the country's oldest anti-nuclear site, won a legal battle against eviction.

JASON HUMBLE, the rally driver who killed a young couple by ramming their car across a dual carriageway, was sentenced to 12 years in jail in one of Britain's first road rage manslaughter convictions.

BRITAIN'S air traffic control system could face a rise in the number of near misses because of problems with the equipping of a new £350 million computer centre near Southampton that should have opened last December.

Bumpy ride, page 24

FOUR children sexually abused by a teenager fostered by their parents won a landmark victory giving them the right to sue the council for negligence in placing him in their home.

ALAN BLYTHE, who supplied his wife with cannabis to ease her pain from multiple sclerosis, was cleared on three out of four drug-related charges.

SUICIDE attempts by girls in their teens and early 20s are at epidemic levels, according to the Samaritans who found that nearly on in five has tried to kill herself before the age of 25.

PETER Boddington, the 60-a-day smoker who mounted a two-year legal crusade for the right to light up on trains, had his case stubbed out in the Lords.

THE stepfather of nine-year-old Zoe Evans has been jailed for life for her murder last year.

ANTHONY-NOEL Kelly was sentenced to nine months in jail for using the dissected human remains of up to 40 bodies as moulds in sculptures.

ANNA FERRETTI, James Hewitt's former fiancé, was arrested after stealing his letters from Diana, Princess to Wales, and attempting to sell them to a tabloid newspaper.

SIR DEREK Barton, British Nobel Laureate in chemistry, has died in Texas aged 79.

Mitchell presents Ulster plan

John Mullin

GEORGE Mitchell, the Northern Ireland talks chairman, on Tuesday finally presented to the participating parties his best guess of where a political settlement lies as serious differences among the parties threatened Thursday's deadline for a deal.

Mr Mitchell, who spoke by telephone throughout the evening with Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, the Irish prime minister, was unable to present the draft agreement that he had planned. Too much disagreement remained, and his long-awaited document instead sets out common areas, options and recommendations.

The British and Irish governments were unable to agree on the powers and functions of cross-border bodies. They eventually decided to lodge separate papers with Mr Mitchell before he completed his own document.

Mr Mitchell, in upbeat form, said: "Seeing the issues in a comprehensive document like this strengthens our belief more than ever that a fair and balanced agreement is possible. We are aware that there remain many disagreements, and we anticipate intensive discussions."

He hoped that there would be no leaks. "Lives and deaths are at stake here. It would be incredible and disturbing if anyone sought to do that for short-term advantage."

The Ulster Unionists and the nationalist SDLP were embroiled throughout Monday in argument over the proposed Northern Ireland assembly. They met at least three times in an effort to resolve their differences, but there was no sign of a breakthough.

Mr Mitchell was desperate to put forward a document by Monday night, aware that time was slipping away. He had planned to pass it to the parties last week, and was angry when Mr Blair and Mr Ahern asked him to wait pending their consultations with the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein. Although increasingly frustrated, Mr Mitchell said that he believed it better that the paper was late and right than on time and wrong.

It had long been assumed that the parties would be able to agree on the operation of an assembly, but Mark Durkan, one of the SDLP's negotiators, denied that. Three strands are being negotiated simultaneously, avoiding the problems inherent in the sequential deals that led to the demise of the ill-fated Sunningdale agreement 25 years ago.

The SDLP wants a power-sharing executive above the assembly. It is also seeking a sufficiency of consensus approach, effectively giving each community in Northern Ireland a veto over all decisions.

Unionists are demanding a committee-style system to run Northern Ireland's six departments. That would mean a weaker assembly than that suggested by the SDLP.

Pleas that the parties should go into purdah once Mr Mitchell produced his document came from Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, and David Andrews, the Irish foreign affairs minister. They are likely to go unheeded.

Blair acts to save mines

Seumas Milne

TONY BLAIR is preparing to end two decades of government hostility towards the mining industry and lift the threat to thousands of coalfield jobs by acting to guarantee coal a slice of Britain's energy market, ministerial sources say.

The reversal of what the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, last year described as a Tory government vendetta against miners has been agreed in principle by ministers in the face of resistance from civil servants and privatised electricity generators.

In a move that marks the limits of New Labour's anti-interventionism, the Government is set to carve out for coal a share of between a quarter and a third of the lop-sided power market — if necessary by requiring generators to maintain a minimum level of coal burning.

The jobs of 10,000 miners, 23 deep-mine collieries and an industry which accounted for 80 per cent of electricity output until 1990 are at stake in a crisis that must be resolved in the next two months.

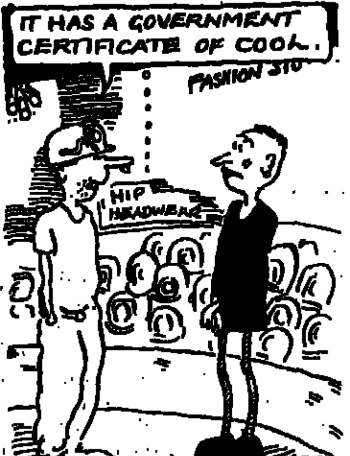
"We have to be absolutely convinced of the strategic, economic and energy case," a minister said. "But it would be simply irrational to let the coal industry go under."

Although the final decisions on how to underpin coal's share of the market will be taken next month — before the current power contracts with the main coal producer, RJB Mining, run out in June — the Cabinet committee in charge of the coal crisis has now settled the central question.

Ministers were faced with three options — allow the "dash for gas" to reduce coal to a cottage industry, manage coal's continued decline or intervene to guarantee a minimum market share.

"The government machine favoured the first and second options," one minister involved in the discussions said. "But ministers are backing the third."

The threat to coal stems from the renegotiation of supply contracts to the electricity generators, which have cut by some 12 million tonnes to around 17 million tonnes a year their orders for domestic coal.



UN probes Belfast death

HUMAN rights organisations welcomed the contents of a United Nations report published last week which calls for a judicial inquiry into alleged security force collusion in the murder in 1989 of a Belfast criminal lawyer, Pat Finucane, *writes John Mullin.*

The report, drawn up by a Malaysian jurist, Param Cumaraswamy, the UN Human Rights Commission special rapporteur, fuels renewed suspicions of army and police collaboration in assassination of suspected IRA terrorists. The RUC refused to comment.

Mr Cumaraswamy also calls for an independent investigation into threats made to lawyers. He alleges that the RUC engages in "activities which constitute intimidation, hindrance and harassment" of solicitors representing terrorist suspects.

His inquiry is the first time the UN has investigated allegations of human rights abuses in the Northern Ireland criminal system.

Mr Cumaraswamy wants the right to silence to be immediately reinstated, and an end to trials without jury, where a judge delivers both verdict and sentence.

Five rights organisations — Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Commission of Jurists, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and the International Federation of Human Rights — back the findings.

Court rejects housing plans

Lucy Ward

THE Government faced fresh embarrassment over greenfield development this week after the High Court ruled that the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, had breached his department's guidelines when he agreed a plan for 113 new homes in a south coast resort.

The court ruled that Mr Prescott should not have cleared plans for a housing development on greenfield land at Peacehaven, East Sussex, which prompted widespread local protest.

Meanwhile the future of another of the country's most controversial planned developments was also cast into doubt as Labour-run Hertfordshire county council voted to delay plans for 10,000 houses to the west of Stevenage. The scheme, which would involve the biggest incursion into green belt land since the second world war and has prompted fierce protests from residents, will now be halted after councillors agreed to ask Mr Prescott to review the housing target for the county.

Friends of the Earth welcomed the double setback for development. The charity's housing campaigner, Simon Festing, said Mr Prescott "cannot ride roughshod over the opinions of local people by allowing so much greenfield development".

In the Peacehaven case, Mr Justice Harrison said Mr Prescott, Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, had erred in law when he gave the scheme his blessing last November.

The judge said the minister had failed properly to consider the strategy of Lewes district council of focusing local development away from the over-crowded coastal strip.

Staff call in sick at 'brutal' prison

Alan Travis

MORE than half the uniformed staff at the flagship prison hit by brutality allegations refused to turn up to work last week by reporting in sick as an investigation started at the jail.

The action by more than 100 prison officers at Wormwood Scrubs in London was defended by the Prison Officers' Association, which claimed that the brutality allegations had led to officers "breaking down in tears" and their families being abused.

The mass refusal to work on sickness grounds halted normal life inside one of Europe's largest prisons, with the 1,300 inmates locked in their cells for most of the day, and work and education classes cancelled. Prison officers are legally banned from taking industrial action and the "mass sickie" was widely seen as an attempt to get round the law.

More than 80 managerial staff from other London prisons and from Prison Service headquarters were drafted in to run the segregation unit — scene of most of the alleged brutality incidents — and other parts of the prison.

The Director-General of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, said "it was not a huge coincidence" that so many prison officers had reported in sick. "We must assume that this is a protest action," he said.

The solicitors Hickman Rose, acting for the inmates, last week gave the Metropolitan police a dossier detailing the allegations that have led to the suspension of eight prison officers and a senior manager.

The Prison Service was alarmed by the protest action, with Mr Tilt saying the refusal to report for duty "did nothing to enhance the reputation of prison officers". He added that support was being made available for staff who were "genuinely suffering from stress".

The disclosure that the senior officer in charge of the jail's segregation unit — the punishment block — is among those suspended on full pay and facing a disciplinary hearing, implies serious management failings at the prison.

Allegations include accusations of racism, beatings and intimidation. One inmate has claimed that he was assaulted by staff almost every day for a month while another claimed his head had been stamped on and banged against a wall. In one case the allegations amount to a claim of torture.

Two inmates who had made allegations were moved out of the jail under armed guard last week for their own protection amid claims of renewed intimidation by prison officers. Most of the prisoners who allege they were beaten are black, and the dossier includes claims that one man was forced to eat a "Black is Beautiful" poster that had been ripped from his cell wall.



Cover up: workers in London begin installing the Millennium Dome's Teflon-coated roof PHOTO: JETHRO HEAS

Cool Britannia gets official stamp of approval

THERE was good news and bad news for Cool Britannia last week, *writes Dan Glaister*. The bad news was that ice-cream moguls Ben & Jerry are to drop their Cool Britannia flavour. The good news was the anointing of 202 officially approved Cool Britannia designs.

A day after the Government unveiled Powerhouse::UK, an exhibition celebrating British design, and named a panel of 33 ambassadors to promote creativity and design abroad, Tony Blair unveiled the first tranche of Millennium Products.

Cyber-creatures, a liquid-gas lorry, a "smart" material and a science discovery centre are some of the first wave of products. By the millennium, 1,000 products will have received the Millennium Products endorsement, and will be shown in the Millennium Dome at Greenwich.

Other products included Skystreme, a reflective device to help rescuers find people lost on mountains. It can be used as a thermal vest or even a splint.

But not everything is cool in Britannia. An all-in-one swimming mask covering eyes and nose received the thumbs down, as did an alternative hot water bottle for warming in a microwave.

The initiative was launched by the Prime Minister last year to identify and promote innovative British products. About 1,000 companies responded, and were judged by a panel of 50 people, including media figures such as Germaine Greer and Peter Snow, and designers such as James Dyson, inventor of the bagless vacuum cleaner.

The initiative is the latest effort to boost the fortunes of Cool Britannia. Run by the Design Council, Millennium Products links some of the biggest names in British industry, such as Ford, Marks & Spencer, British Airways and British Steel, with small designers.

Meanwhile the 33 members of the nation's cool warriors on Panel 2000 held their first meeting. The task force — including dress designer, Stella McCartney and Channel 4 presenter Zeinab Badawi — is charged with leading a "full frontal attack on the myth of a tired Britain".

Animals infected as new tests launched into origins of BSE

James Meikle

NEW multi-million pound tests have been launched on cattle, sheep and mice in a bid to crack the causes of the BSE epidemic.

Top security buildings are being constructed to house the animals, including cows that have been deliberately infected with different doses of BSE and strains of scrapie — a similar condition in sheep — in an attempt to understand the disease.

A flock of a sheep has also been imported from New Zealand — which has never had scrapie — to act as a control group. Scrapie is thought never to have been transferred to humans, but its cattle equivalent, "mad cow disease", is believed to have infected 24 people.

In the past 10 years £80 million has been spent on researching animal and human strains of the condition that affects the brain and central nervous system.

More than 170,000 cows have been diagnosed as having BSE and 2 million have been destroyed in measures designed to protect the human food chain and end the European Union ban on exports.

A number of theories have been put forward for the crisis, including one that scrapie from sheep was transferred into cattle through their feed. Other explanations include cows being infected through eating the products of other cattle already infected by undiagnosed cases of BSE.

But money is also now being devoted to researching other causes, including the possibility that prion proteins were deformed into infectious agents by organophosphate pesticides.

Scientists are also testing potatoes and the leaves of the daisy, toadflax, bindweed and other English plants to see whether they played a part in the BSE epidemic because cows ate them. Government-funded institutes conducting experiments are also hoping to discover chemicals in the plants that offer clues for a cure for the disease as well as its cause.

Meanwhile a doctor told the BSE inquiry last week how he endured ridicule after issuing the first alert about the risk of BSE infecting humans — nearly eight years before ministers admitted he could be right.

Tim Holt had been out of medical school a year when he raised the alarm in 1988. Yet it was not until March 1996 that the then health secretary, Stephen Dorrell, agreed there was a possible link between BSE and a new variant of the incurable human condition, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

Dr Holt and Julie Phillips, a dietician, wrote an article on the possible risks to human health in the British Medical Journal in June 1988, thought to be the first entry in medical literature on the issue.

Dr Holt said he wrote it because "the BSE issues were falling between the stools of a food industry with vested interests, a medical profession with little veterinary knowledge, a veterinary profession with no knowledge of human prion disease, and a government eager to avoid another food scare".

Lottery operator dumps US shareholder

Kamal Ahmed

THE COMPANY whose chairman was found guilty of trying to bribe Richard Branson has been dumped as a shareholder in Camelot, the lottery operator.

G-Tech, which has been battered by bad publicity following the allegations concerning Guy Snowden, agreed to sell its 22.5 per cent share to the other main shareholders.

In a separate move, the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, announced that a five-strong Lottery Commission would replace the post of lottery regulator.

Camelot has been struggling to restore its reputation after it became entangled in the bribery allegations against Mr Snowden, who led the Camelot bid to run the lottery and was a director of the company until his resignation in February. Mr Snowden also resigned as chairman of G-Tech after a jury found against him over the bribery allegations.

Demands that G-Tech sever all links with the lottery have not been met. The United States company will still be paid by Camelot for providing the lottery machines where millions buy their tickets every week.

Oflot, the Government-appointed regulator, is still investigating whether the company is fit to have any relationship with Camelot.

"Camelot believes that this is the right response to the public mood for a largely British-owned operator of the National Lottery, and that it is in the best interests of lottery players," a statement from Camelot said.

The announcement of a new lottery commission comes after the previous director-general of Oflot, Peter Davis, resigned over the Snowden affair. Mr Davis had accepted free flights from G-Tech while visiting the US to look at lotteries.

Mr Davis's successor at Oflot, John Stoker, said: "The commission will have five members and will be serviced by Oflot. Its introduction will reduce the risk, actual or perceived, of conflicts of interest and remove the focus on an individual."

Thatcher makes century's top 20 list

John Ezard

BARONESS Thatcher's dearest historical wish is gratified this week. A poll brackets her with Winston Churchill as one of the two greatest British "leaders and revolutionaries" of the 20th century.

Sadly — for her purposes — she also finds herself ranked with Nelson Mandela, Ayatollah Khomenei and Adolf Hitler.

She and Churchill are the only British names to emerge from an Internet poll of more than 2 million people by Time magazine of those who have "most influenced the course of world events and the fate of humankind this century".

Time's choice of profile writers is mixed. On Hitler, Holocaust scholar and Nobel Prize-winner Elie Wiesel writes: "Few politicians of this century have aroused, in their lifetime, such love and so much hate."

But the case for Lady Thatcher is put by one of her most vehement admirers, journalist and historian Paul Johnson, who writes that she "gave a revolutionary twist" to the 1980s and 1990s, and "helped mankind end the millennium on a note of hope and confidence".

The rest of the list is: Ronald Reagan, Franklin, Eleanor and Theodore Roosevelt, Pope John Paul II, Mahatma Gandhi, Israel's founding prime minister David Ben-Gurion, Mikhail Gorbachev, Ho Chi Minh, Martin Luther King, Lenin, Mao Zedong, birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger, Lech Walesa, and the unknown man who confronted a tank in Tiananmen Square.

Britain to repay Nazi victims

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE Government last week apologised for the way Britain treated hundreds of Holocaust victims whose assets it seized during the second world war and never repaid, healing a sore that has been festering for more than 50 years.

The Trade and Industry Secretary, Margaret Beckett, also announced a special claims procedure for Jews whose property and money were taken by the wartime government under "trading with the enemy" laws. An initial £2 million will be made available, she said.

Her apology was prompted by the publication of a Foreign Office report that contains damning evidence of postwar Whitehall's lack of sympathy with Jews and other persecuted individuals who deposited their assets in what they regarded as a safe haven.

The decision to establish an independently monitored claims procedure, taken after consultations with Downing Street, is a significant U-turn. Less than a week earlier, Mrs Beckett was preparing to announce a one-off compensation fund. But Jewish groups dismissed her proposed fund as "conscience money".

The Foreign Office also made clear that setting up a charitable fund would be unacceptable, especially against the background of the controversy surrounding last month's visit by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, to the Har Homa Jewish settlement in Israeli-occupied Arab territory, and of the Prime Minister's impending visit to Israel.

Mrs Beckett conceded that officials responsible for handling seized assets were "sometimes insensitive to the plight of Nazi victims". She added: "The Government deeply regrets this, and I would like to apologise to those individuals and to their relatives and descendants. A different attitude would be expected now." She said she wished to make clear the Government was "revolted" by Nazi persecution.

Although the Foreign Office report goes out of the way to emphasise the difficulties facing postwar Whitehall with conflicting claims and Nazi money-laundering, it makes clear that officials gave priority to claims by British companies — whose foreign assets had been seized by the enemy — over those by individuals.

It quotes one official, R R Whitty, as saying: "I have every sympathy with Jews (and others) who have suffered in the concentration camps, but I do not know how you will distinguish between the Jew who has been persecuted because of his race or religion, and one who has been sent to a concentration camp for committing a criminal offence against the law of his country."

Whitehall argued at length about what was meant by "deprivation of liberty" in Germany and Nazi-occupied countries, with the Treasury insisting it might be difficult to distinguish "between the refugee from Nazi oppression and the rat leaving the sinking ship".

The report describes how Whitehall officials enthusiastically opened private bank safes if it was suspected they contained gold or currency. But the postwar government's attitude was far from consistent. All frozen Polish assets in Britain, including those of dead Holocaust victims, were returned to the new communist government in Warsaw, which kept them. Yet individual Austrians, including Nazis, were handed back their assets.

Ninety per cent of the value of "enemy assets" seized have already been distributed, leaving an estimated £60 million in today's money. It is estimated that up to £10 million could still be owed to Jews and other Nazi victims. The Government is to publish the 25,000 names of those whose assets were seized and whose records exist.

Lord Janner, chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust, welcomed the Government's decision. "Justice has been delayed and denied for far too long. Now there is new hope," he said.

UK anthrax 'sold to Iraq'

Michael White

THE Foreign Office was investigating claims last week that anthrax strains from the Government's biological warfare establishment at Porton Down in Wiltshire were sold to a United States firm that sold them on to Iraq.

The allegations, which go beyond previous admissions that British and Swiss firms sold huge quantities of anthrax to Saddam Hussein's regime in the late 1980s, were made by the Liberal Democrats in a renewed campaign for tighter controls on military exports.

Last month the Sun newspaper reported that an all-ports alert had been issued over the possibility that Iraq was smuggling anthrax into Britain as a potential "retaliation" against attack on its suspected chemical and biological weapons sites. As with previous alarms involving Iraq, critics warned that public opinion was being manipulated to justify military action against it.

Former military leaders, including General Sir Michael Rose, have joined Amnesty and Oxfam in protesting that the Government is not doing enough to control arms exports, and risks a fresh scandal. Britain has 22 per cent of the world arms sales market, second only to the US.

Opening his party's Commons debate on the arms trade, the Lib Dem defence and foreign affairs spokesman, Menzies Campbell, said that new US research showed that Britain had "laid the foundations for the Iraqi biological and chemical weapons" that prompted the narrowly averted showdown between the United Nations and Baghdad. Mr Campbell said there was an "irresistible inference that some of the anthrax that Iraq obtained originated in Britain".

Land of the rising sums

IT IS NOT often that governments urge their citizens to go out on a binge and spend, spend, spend. But that is exactly what is happening in Japan as the country tries to stave off what could be a very serious recession with ominous implications for Asia and the rest of the world. Having failed to stimulate the economy so far with four successive reflationary packages (and a fifth in the pipeline), the government has torn up the economics textbooks and launched an advertising campaign instead. It has taken space in 22 magazines and on 22,000 poster sites imploring people to go out and spend.

This approach addresses the economy's most pressing short-term problem — lack of consumer demand — but it won't necessarily work. The Japanese are becoming so afraid of their financial futures and so mistrustful of government that they prefer simply to save rather than spend. One of the few booming markets in Japan is for home safes, where people can keep their cash secure from prying governments and dodgy banks. The Japanese now save more than 30 per cent of their disposable income, the highest ratio for more than 25 years.

The Japanese economy is not yet a basket case but could easily become one if fear becomes endemic. Its manufacturing sector is still a formidable wealth-creating machine (albeit hit by the collapse of markets at home and elsewhere in East Asia). It has low inflation and a huge balance of payments surplus. But there is a paralysis of decision-making at the heart of government, a financial sector dripping with bad debts and a stock market that has just taken a bath. Last week the first of the "Big Bang" deregulation reforms took effect. Over time these could help reform by allowing weaker banks to go to the wall, leaving the field open for stronger Japanese firms and ambitious overseas ones. But in the short-term liberalisation of foreign exchange regulations is likely to encourage fearful investors to desert domestic savings (offering minute interest rates) in favour of attractive foreign stocks. This will be offset if Japanese organisations feeling the squeeze repatriate some of the vast assets they have accumulated abroad, but there's bound to be a net outflow of cash which will depress the already undervalued yen — thereby compounding Asia's woes.

The short-term problem was unquestionably caused by the government's ill-advised decision to raise value added tax a year ago. Consumers spent heavily in the months leading up to the increase, and then abruptly stopped. The obvious answer is to reverse that decision. But even so, there is no guarantee that recipients won't just add the surplus to their savings. The five packages announced by the government are a mixture of measures to stabilise the banking system, modest tax cuts and public spending increases. The trouble is that support is being given to bad banks as well as good ones, while the spending has become embroiled in the pork-barrel politics of the ruling Liberal Democratic party as it woos voters in the run-up to the general election.

Japan has a problem Britain would love to have: excess savings. But that doesn't make a solution any easier. Consumers should spend more and corporations ought to invest more. But if they don't, government will have to spend it for them — on real projects, not pre-electoral confections. In case that doesn't work, the rest of the world had better be on standby. The world's second biggest economy is too vital to be left to go belly-up.

New perils in Israel

WHOEVER killed the Second Engineer matters much less than the likely consequences. These could be as severe as those that have almost destroyed the Middle East peace process since Israeli agents killed the No 1 of the Hamas terrorist organisation two years ago. There is a difference between the killings. Last week the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, was quick to deny that Israeli intelligence had anything to do with the death of Muhi al-Din Sharif, shot dead on the West Bank late last month. He may even be telling the truth. In January 1996 Israeli sources were only too happy to nudge and wink after "the Engineer" Yahya Ayyash was blown up in Gaza, in a killing that led to a wave of retaliatory suicide attacks — and to the electoral victory of the Likud party and Mr Netanyahu himself. But in the situation today, where a single spark may start a fire, a denial has little relevance.

Even without this killing, the latest United States initiative is already in a desperate state of dither. The administration cannot decide whether to continue playing along with Mr Netanyahu's strategy of minimal concessions that can be claimed to keep the peace process "alive". The Israeli acceptance, 20 years late, of United Nations Resolution 425 on withdrawal from Lebanon — but only subject to "security arrangements" — is a more transparent diversion. Or should Bill Clinton go public with a plan that would shift the burden of decision back onto the Israelis? Such a plan — the "13 per cent pullback" of Israeli forces from the West Bank — does not appear to have been formally delivered by the US envoy, Dennis Ross. Nor does Mr Netanyahu's supposed counter-offer (which he, too, has formally denied) of 11 per cent. Yasser Arafat seems inclined to accept the US proposal though it falls far short of Palestinian demands.

This is all shadow boxing. The issue is rather which side is more willing to risk a total breakdown of the peace process. Mr Arafat from his weaker position continues to make the greater concessions: Mr Netanyahu pleads weakness in the shape of domestic hawks, but plays from what he perceives as strength.

The suggestion that the Palestinian Authority might have arranged the death of Hamas's No 2 to demonstrate its commitment to Israeli "security" defies commonsense. No one knows better than Mr Arafat that in a real explosion his power base would be the first victim. For any Israeli leader to countenance an action that could trigger a return to bombings also seems an act of huge folly. Yet the deed can only have been committed with the intent of wrecking what remains of the peace process.

The signal that this sends should be felt everywhere, particularly in Washington. Mr Clinton is said to be unconvinced that an open clash with Mr Netanyahu is good tactics — but since when did a compromise plan amount to confrontation? Next month's visit to Israel by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, should become part of a concerted effort. If quiet diplomacy will not break the deadlock, a louder version must be tried.

Big bang and a whimper

BY BECOMING the first nuclear weapons states to carry out ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Britain and France have given the process a small nudge that may encourage the other three overt nuclear powers. A united front of all five is the minimum requirement for moving forward. Alas, the minimum is not enough.

One reason is that the CTBT needs 44 named states to ratify it. These include India and Pakistan, who have no intention of signing. But there is also widespread scepticism that the treaty merely legitimises the dominance of the nuclear five. As Robert Bell, arms control director at the United States National Security Council put it, "the point of the treaty is to ban the bang, not to ban the bomb". Only last week the Los Alamos National Laboratory was said to be producing plutonium triggers in order to "prepare a reserve supply if additional weapons are built in the future".

It is true that the very existence of the treaty may make it harder for a would-be nuclear power to develop weapons. The International Monitoring System now being set up will make it virtually impossible to avoid detection. It is true too that failure to conclude the treaty would have set back the cause of nuclear restraint significantly. It may also be argued that the South Asian problem has its own dynamic that was never going to respond to appeals for self-denial. Yet in the end the blatant character of the nuclear monopoly must reduce the credibility of the treaty and encourage "rogue" nuclear states to ignore it.

Cynicism will only be dispelled by visibly serious efforts to scale down arsenals to a real minimum — in the spirit of the pledge given by the five when negotiating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said this week that Britain's CTBT ratification signalled a commitment to a nuclear weapons-free world. With the non-nuclear option excluded even from the current defence review, who is going to believe him?

No more rich ethnicity please, we're British

Jeremy Hardy

THE British Home Secretary, Jack Straw, was reassuring us last week that Labour was not soft on asylum claims. He is so adamant that I feel it would be just and suitable nemesis were it to transpire that his son has been selling forged travel documents in Sierra Leone.

Scary immigration stories have been coming thick and fast since a small number of Romanies arrived in Dover last year. To demonstrate what a hold this mythology has on impressionable minds, I shall quote a barrister who was defending a wealthy Swiss banker caught shoplifting in Harrods last December. Richard St Clair-Gainer told Horseferry Road magistrates: "This is not some Gypsy from some part of Czechoslovakia, who has come here to go into our stores and steal with a gang."

But in the past couple of weeks the British have been told that they are besieged mainly by Turks, Africans, Russians and ethnic Albanians — and all because of the bloody Belgians. It seems that they are sending huddled masses to Britain on the Eurostar. I think what galled the rightwing papers most was the fact of refugees travelling on a comfortable train. To qualify as a genuine asylum-seeker, one is expected to arrive clinging to a leaky raft, with only a tiny radio tuned to the BBC World Service.

Clearly, it is appalling that some other European countries are dumping refugees in Britain, but only because it means that they are expelling refugees. The Belgians are being attacked for the wrong reason. The real victims are the people dumped. I am at a loss to understand how anyone can feel hostile towards people who are trying to start a new life. They are called "spongers" and "chancers", who are milking the benefit system. But nowhere do we see the suggestion that we need to get refugees off benefit and into work. Indeed, anyone caught working without a permit is immediately arrested and deported.

And nowhere has any xenophobe pointed out that if the European Union were to expand to include Russia, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia, then anyone from those places would be entitled to come to Britain to live and work. If the Czech Republic and Slovakia were admitted, I guess all their Gypsies could come, as I have received letters from Czech and Slovak patriots insisting that their Romanies are definitely not stateless.

This is not an anti-EU tirade; it's merely an observation. I don't mind who lives where and I'm not quaking in my boots about the 15 European countries who might be considering dumping their entire populations on Britain.

Living in fear of what might happen drives people mad. In the sixties we were all terrified of the birth rate and in the eighties we were warned that there were not enough babies being born to support the growing army of old people. The old, it seems, are multiplying at an alarming rate, as bits fall off them and start new ones, like starfish. I'm sure it is the case that, if everyone sneezed at the same time, the Earth would be thrown off its axis, but I think it's best to get on with life none the less.

I do get distracted wondering how many racist South Africans are entitled to flee democracy and make their homes in Britain, and I can't say I'm overly fond of the Swiss; but if my street starts to hum with the pong of Boerwurst and fondue, I'll just have to deal with it.

I dare say that some people who claim that they are fleeing persecution are fibbing, but even then you can't blame them, because it's extremely hard to migrate if you give any other reason. You're not allowed to flee poverty, for example. That's "economic" so it doesn't count. Britain has drawn a line and said, "We are proud of the richness of our ethnic diversity, and grateful for your contributions to sport, catering, young people's music and brightly-coloured fabric; but we don't want any more of you, thank you very much."

It's hard to know whether asylum claims are "genuine" because it's highly subjective. We keep reading the word "bogus" but all it means is that immigration officials, whose job it is to keep foreigners out of the country, have rejected an application. When I think of someone who has fled racism, religious persecution or war, nervously speaking through an interpreter while a civil servant asks: "When you say you were beaten, were you cut or merely bruised?" it puts me in mind of the cross-examination of rape victims.

No one seems to consider that it's very traumatic to uproot yourself and try to start all over again

Last week the Law Lords upheld an appeal by the Home Secretary to the effect that, from now on, members of a persecuted group have to prove that they are more likely to be persecuted than other members of that group. In other words, the fact that not everybody in the world wants or is able to come to Britain is held against those who do.

No one seems to consider the fact that it's a very traumatic thing to uproot yourself and leave a home, a family and friends and try to start all over again in another part of the world; and yet, when we think of the Jews who perished in the camps, every one of us with a heart wishes that they'd all got out in time.

Now it seems the Home Office plans to chuck asylum applicants out within 10 days of the rejection to make it very hard for people to appeal. It is because the decisions of bureaucrats are rightly open to legal challenge that there are so many people in Britain of uncertain status. Even then, there aren't that many. The Sun newspaper says that there are enough asylum seekers on benefit in Britain to fill Wembley stadium, which frankly isn't very frightening. The Coca-Cola Cup football final was held there recently, and I doubt whether anyone was heard to say, "Blimey — there are enough people here to fill Wembley Stadium."

10 ANS ? POUR UN PETIT TAMPON DE RIEN DU TOUT ?

PRÉFECTURE DE BORDEAUX

Ten years? Just for using a silly rubber stamp?

Was justice really served?

COMMENT
Pierre Georges

THE news came over the agency wires as "urgent" shortly after 9am on April 2. The jury at the six-month trial of Maurice Papon in Bordeaux had just sentenced the defendant to 10 years' imprisonment for complicity in crimes against humanity.

The jurors handed down their sentence according to their "innermost conviction", as the law requires. Papon was guilty. But only of complicity, and not of complicity in everything. He was deemed to have been an accomplice to the arrest and illegal confinement of four of the eight groups of Jews who, between 1942 and 1944, were sent by train from Bordeaux to the Drancy transit centre near Paris on their way to Nazi death camps. But he was not found to have been an accomplice to murder.

In other words he was a semi-accomplice, according to a semi-verdict. It is not customary to comment on court sentences, especially so soon after the event. But in this case the accused himself commented on the nature of the verdict before it was handed down. On April 1, in his final statement to the court, Papon asked: "Is there any such thing as a 10, 15, 30 or 60 per cent crime against humanity?

"This [kind of] crime cannot be divided up. It's all or nothing — either I'm guilty or I'm innocent."

Let us admit that from a purely logical point of view a crime against humanity cannot be cut up into sections, and that guilt or the length of a sentence cannot be calculated according to the percentage of responsibility.

In Papon's view, what does 10 years represent? Ten, 15, 30 or 60 per cent? It is either too much or, given the number of lives and families annihilated by the Nazis, not nearly enough.

Papon was quite right to talk of "all or nothing". There could not be a verdict that saw him just as a modest, secondary, subordinate and unconscious accomplice to a crime against humanity — a "paper player", as someone described him.

Nor could there be a ruling that treated him as a collaborator in the Holocaust against his will, a senior French administration official forced to supply victims to an all-powerful German Nazi machine, when he so zealously and efficiently drew up the lists of those to be deported.

They were not just "paper" lists. They were made of flesh and blood; of men, women and children whose names went on the lists solely because they were Jewish, whose sole "crime" was to have been born Jewish.

In ruling that Papon had not been an accomplice to murder, the court accepted the argument that the man who drew up those lists was unaware of the appalling fate that awaited the helpless people who had been identified, registered, rounded up and dispatched in cattle trucks. The court did its duty: it followed its "innermost conviction" after a gruelling trial — the longest in postwar French legal history.

One may, I think, be forgiven for not sharing that conviction, in view of what Papon had told the court several months earlier: on December 19 he admitted that he knew the trainloads of Jews were being sent to concentration camps, and described their fate as a departure towards "annihilation".

(April 3)

Cambodia braces for a rough ride to elections

Jean-Claude Pomonti
in Phnom Penh

BY greatly reducing the last pocket of Khmer Rouge resistance in the far north of the country, Cambodia's strongman, Hun Sen, has strengthened his hand in the fraught run-up to the elections in July.

The Khmer Rouge have suffered a serious setback at their sole remaining stronghold, near the town of Anlong Veng on the Thai border. Several of their units recently rebelled against the movement's ageing leadership. With the help of troops loyal to Hun Sen, these Khmer Rouge renegades are now fighting for control of the military base.

This development conveniently diverted attention from the return of King Norodom Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, to Phnom Penh last week. Last July, while he was on a trip abroad, Ranariddh was overthrown as Cambodia's senior prime minister by Hun Sen, the second prime minister.

On March 29 the Royal Army, which has been under Hun Sen's control since Ranariddh was deposed, escorted a group of Cambodian journalists to a point 15km from the Thai border where Khmer Rouge forces in the foothills of the Dangrek mountains were being subjected to artillery fire. The journalists were taken to within 2km of the homes of Ta Mok and Khieu Sampan, two Khmer Rouge leaders who have been on the run since some of their troops rebelled.

The Khmer Rouge forces admitted that up to 5,000 civilians had fled the combat zone, but claimed still to be in control. General Im Nguon, the Khmer Rouge military commander, said that forces led by Ta Mok, Pol Pot's presumed successor, "could probably mop up the sector within two or three days".

The Thai military, which has been monitoring the situation, said that the Anlong Veng sector had not yet fallen to the rebel Khmer Rouge, who had received support from the Royal Army.

The Thais added that, contrary to claims from Phnom Penh, the ruins of Preah Vihear, 65km to the east, were still in the hands of Khmer Rouge forces loyal to Ta Mok and Khieu Sampan.

Even if the Khmer Rouge succeed in regaining control of the situation, the fighting and desertions are bound to sap the strength of a rebellion that is now being waged by only 2,000-3,000 isolated fighters.

The Royal Army chiefs have said that they will try to capture the Khmer Rouge old guard alive. That may include Pol Pot himself, who is believed to have followed Ta Mok and Khieu Sampan to their hideout. On March 29 Bangkok denied having received a request for political asylum from the two Khmer Rouge leaders.

Meanwhile, in a more strained atmosphere than usual, the political opposition in Cambodia swung back into action when Ranariddh returned to Phnom Penh as a result of a deal between King Sihanouk, now in the Chinese capital, Beijing, and the Hun Sen government.

When the prince flew in from Bangkok he was met at the airport by 400 party activists and a posse of reporters. Hundreds of supporters lined the road from the airport. A few hours earlier, in the company of several hundred supporters, another leading opposition figure, Sam Rainsy, had commemorated the first anniversary of the grenade attack that killed at least 17 people and wounded about 150 a year ago. Rainsy, who is also standing at the July election, survived the attack, which was intended to kill him.

The return of Ranariddh, who was granted a royal pardon after being sentenced by a judiciary he does not recognise, is part of a Japanese-brokered plan that aims to get the prince's last remaining armed supporters re-integrated into the Royal Army so that a "free and honest" election can be held.

But Sihanouk, responding to a request from Hun Sen, made it clear that he would not pardon Ranariddh's military chiefs. So it looks as though the run-up to July's election is going to be a bumpy one.

(March 31)

Russia's mafia strides into the political limelight

Sophie Shihab in Moscow

AT A TIME when observers are desperately trying to fathom the Byzantine intrigues going on in the Kremlin, two Russian provinces have been rocked by scandals that provide alarming evidence that the country's home-grown mafia is playing an increasing role in politics.

One of the cases involves General Alexander Lebed, who has re-emerged from semi-obscurity to make a bid for the post of governor of the region of Krasnoyarsk in Central Siberia. The other scandal concerns Boris Nemtsov, President Boris Yeltsin's young protégé, and his birthplace, Nizhny Novgorod.

When Nemtsov was governor of the region he turned the city into a showcase for the "Russia that works". Today, however, Nizhny Novgorod has humiliated Nemtsov and dealt a blow to his already flagging popularity.

On March 29 Nemtsov's deadly rival, Andrei Klimentiev, was elected mayor of the city. Klimentiev is a young businessman whose past has been described as "criminal". He had been a close friend of Nemtsov's before he was found guilty of fraud and of distributing pornographic films. Klimentiev was sentenced to eight years in a Soviet camp.

When he was released he became an even closer friend of Nemtsov, who had in the meantime become regional governor. Klimentiev obtained various favours from Nemtsov until the two men fell out in 1995.

Klimentiev was accused of having misappropriated part of a government loan intended for the local shipyard, and was given an 18-month jail sentence. He claimed that Nemtsov had slandered him and had denounced him to the secret services in order to mask his own corrupt practices. The young governor, who had by then become the second most important member of the government in Moscow, counterattacked by suing Klimentiev for libel.

This sad saga, familiar to everyone in Nizhny Novgorod, failed to deter 33 per cent of its inhabitants from voting for Klimentiev. In the election he managed to nose ahead of his two rivals, one of whom was supported by Nemtsov and the other by Nemtsov's successor as regional governor.

According to the local press Klimentiev conducted a "brilliant" election campaign, claiming to be "a rightwing patriot and an opponent of the regime". He got a helping hand from the maverick nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Klimentiev promised the moon to wage-earners and pensioners who had not received a cent for months. His two lacklustre rivals, however, had seemed confident of victory.

News of Klimentiev's win flabbergasted the political community in Moscow. On March 31 a spokesman for Yeltsin said that the president was "deeply concerned" at the intrusion of criminals on to the political stage.

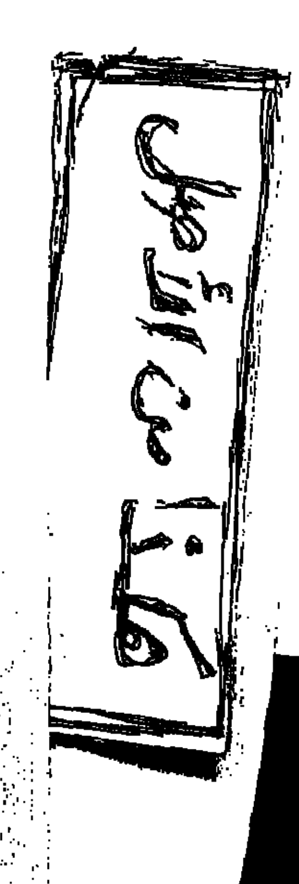
Russia's chief public prosecutor immediately announced that the election could be invalidated because of irregularities. Yet when Klimentiev appeared on the television programme The Hero Of The Day, he came across as self-confident and sarcastic: "Cancel the election? Who'll take the decision? I'm now the biggest boss here."

While that scandal was unfolding, Lebed made an astonishing confession in the depths of Siberia. When asked who provided his funds, the founder of the Honour and Fatherland party said: "People who work and earn money, and who like you, tend to be on the fiddle. I won't name them, otherwise the public prosecutor will go and see them. Isn't that clear enough? I repeat; it's so-called 'grey' money — money honestly earned, but on which you pay no tax, because the tax system in this country is silly. It's a sin that everyone in Russia is unfortunately guilty of. Everyone."

This outburst, reported by the daily Isvestia, was made by Lebed at his first election meeting, in the stronghold of Krasnoyarsk's new boss, Anatoly Bykov, whose activities range from aluminium to the mass media and "charities".

Bykov is a man with an even murkier past than the mayor of Nizhny Novgorod. Yet Lebed had no compunction about taking him on as his chief aide in his bid to take power in Krasnoyarsk and later — who knows? — in Moscow.

(April 2)



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 12 1998

Rémy Ourdan reports from Murambi on a country trying to come to terms with the traumas left behind by the civil war

Living under the shadow of genocide

THE VILLAGE of Murambi, near Gikongoro in southern Rwanda, seems at first sight quite an ordinary place. It stands on a hill, which is dotted with brick houses, clumps of banana trees and neatly cultivated fields of sorghum.

But its inhabitants are unsmiling, and their faces expressionless. This is a legacy of the massacres that took place here, as in many other Rwandan villages, in the spring of 1994. But in Murambi, the stench of death lingers on.

Emmanuel spends the whole day sprinkling the former school buildings with powder. "All those dead — I don't know if it was the will of God or the devil," he says pointing to a classroom. The floor is strewn with twisted children's corpses, some of them no more than skeletons, others still covered with desiccated flesh.

Solitary skulls have been laid out on a trestle table. "These are people who had their heads cut off," says Emmanuel, looking straight through me. All he can see are the corpses, exhumed from mass graves, and the bucket of chemical powder that is supposed to preserve human remains.

In 1994 up to 70,000 Tutsis took refuge in Murambi's school. There were only four survivors, according to Emmanuel: "Two men, one woman and one child, my daughter Kayitesi". All the others, including 28 of his relatives, were killed.

The Rwandan government in Kigali has decreed that the site of the massacre should be turned into a Memorial of the Genocide — the third and, one hopes, last 20th century genocide recognised by the international community, after that of the Armenians by the Turks in 1915 and of the Jews by the Nazis.

Emmanuel remembers the massacre of April 1994: "Interahamwe Hutu militiamen fired at us, killing some and wounding others. They went from house to house, tossing grenades through the windows at women and children. They finished off the wounded with machetes and knives. The attack lasted two days. I was shot in the head and lost consciousness. They thought I was dead. The next night I managed to crawl into the bush. My whole family was exterminated, except for Kayitesi. She was saved by an old Hutu woman who found her after the massacre.

"When I came back, I agreed to work here. This is where the members of my family are, even if they're dead. I don't want people to draw a veil over those events, to deny that they ever happened. When they dug up the corpses, I couldn't sleep any more. I got drunk. I was certified insane. Now I know I'll stay here till the end of my days. I'm a first-aid worker — I go to the aid of the memory of the dead."

Historians put the number of Rwandans killed in 1994 at about 800,000. The vast majority were Tutsis, but Hutus were also murdered. Rwanda now lives in the shadow of that genocide. The survivors, haunted by the carnage and the loss of loved ones, face a continuing nightmare of murders, of justice not being done, of a denial of their suffering. The killers are torn between admitting to participating in the genocide, and strenuously denying any involvement, as do the majority of the Hutu community and a number of foreign intellectuals.



Hutu prisoners awaiting trial after the 1994 massacres PHOTOGRAPH: ADRIAN ARBIB

Hutus and Tutsis still live side by side in Rwanda. The hounded, wounded, raped and humiliated Tutsis fear that the Hutus may be tempted to finish off the job. True, a Tutsi army has been in power since the military victory of the Tutsi guerrillas from Uganda, which ended the genocide. But Tutsis still account for only about 15 per cent of the population and are surrounded in their villages by potentially hostile neighbours.

Along with the killers, the rest of the Hutu population fears that the Tutsis may seek revenge and carry out a counter-massacre.

The 1994 killings were masterminded by Colonel Théoneste Bagosora, rebellious officers in the Rwandan Armed Forces (RAF), and members of other extremist movements who believed in Hutu supremacy. Under the cover of secret societies they had been planning the massacre for years. Their aim was to scuttle the Arusha accords — signed in 1993 by the government and the Tutsi rebels — and to exterminate Rwandan Tutsis.

They had a lot going for them: a society that was extremely hierarchical and disciplined, a farming community that was being slowly throttled by mounting poverty and a shortage of land, ethnic rivalry that had been thriving for 30 years, and

'Every Hutu family has at least one murderer, just as there's at least one victim in every Tutsi family'

an anti-Tutsi propaganda machine that had been in operation since the first attack by Tutsi guerrillas of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1990.

The murder of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Tutsis was not the result of spontaneous killings or innate bestiality, as has been suggested by the champions of a "Hutuland/Tutsiland" solution to the problems of Rwanda and Burundi, neighbouring and closely interconnected countries.

When Canadian general Roméo Dallaire, a former commander of the United Nations Aid Mission in Rwanda (Unamir), gave evidence before the international genocide tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, in February, he stressed that the Hutus had been able to kill nearly 1 million people and move between 3 million and 4 million others out of the country within 14 weeks. "There was a methodology," he said.

It was easy for the Hutu extremists to find people to do their dirty work for them. Hordes of Hutu farmers massacred their Tutsi neighbours with machetes. Some were forced to do so, others took part enthusiastically. The Hutus organised festivities after the killings, got drunk and ate their booty (a goat or a cow). Never before had so many people who were neither under arms nor politically committed shed so much of their neighbours' blood.

"Crimes always went unpunished in Rwanda," says Alice Karekezi, a human rights activist. "There was genocide because there was impunity before that. Some people will naively tell you how many neighbours they killed, neighbours they used to drink with. It was nothing like the Nazi system. Murder had formed an almost integral part of daily life for decades. Some knew that they were going to die, and others that they were going to kill."

Earlier clashes were between regional clans and had no ethnic connotation. Hutus, Tutsis and Twas (pygmies) used to live together harmoniously. They spoke the same language. Mixed marriages were so common that although Hutus and Tutsis had and sometimes still have different physical characteristics, it is now difficult to tell the ethnic origins of most Rwandans from their physique alone.

"The colonisers, and especially the missionaries, sowed the first seeds of division," says Denis Polisi, an RPF ideologue. "They talked of the distant origins of the Tutsis. They introduced an identity card that indicated the holder's ethnic group and gave all the privileges to those they called Tutsis."

In 1925 the Belgian colonial ministry issued a report in which it described the Twas as physically similar to the monkeys whose forests they inhabited. They were a race that was "becoming extinct". The Hutus were "small, squat, with jolly faces, very flat noses and huge lips, expansive, noisy, cheerful and simple".

"The Tutsis," it went on, "are a fine race that are negro in no way

'Unless something is done, this country will become one huge psychiatric hospital in the next 10 years'

except for their skin colour. They are very tall. Their features, when young, are very pure — a straight forehead, an aquiline nose and thin lips covering dazzling teeth. Highly intelligent, they often display a delicacy of feeling that is surprising for a primitive people, and possess extraordinary self-control."

Ethnic divisions began to wreak havoc. For the oppressed Hutus, the Tutsis were seen not only as tyrants in league with the colonial power, but foreigners from distant lands such as Ethiopia. The killers of Tutsis in 1994 who bothered to take away the corpses often threw them into rivers, such as the Yangorabo, which flow in the direction of East Africa.

In 1959 settlers and missionaries switched horses and supported the Hutu "social revolution". The Tutsis were overthrown and many went into exile. Their children joined the ranks of the RPF, which came to power in 1994.

Between the arrival of the first German settlers at the end of the 19th century and the genocide a century later, there was a gradual change in attitudes that had a bearing on the tragedy.

Decades of religious fervour and submission to authority were partly responsible for the extreme behaviour that took place in 1994. Hutu farmers did not refuse to take part in the massacres. And the Tutsis, instead of organising resistance in the hills, took refuge in local administrative buildings and churches, symbols of authority, when mayors were organising genocide locally and Hutu priests rarely opposed it. The Tutsis were led like lambs to the slaughter.

At the Arusha tribunal a judge asked a witness why she had gone to the local administrative building when she knew that people were being killed there. The witness said: "I did so because I knew people were shot there. I didn't want to be killed by clubs and machetes." Another witness said: "One Tutsi bought a grenade so the Interahamwes would kill him with it rather than use their machetes or cut off his fingers or ears."

Attitudes have not changed over the years. Villagers rarely question an order. "A chief is a chief in this country," says Polisi. "Respect for authority must remain a fundamental response, but we want to encourage the population to take part in the decision-making process. They're going to be choosing the delegates. We're preparing the ground for democracy."

While waiting for the advent of democracy, which has never existed here and which is not something that the RPF is committed to, the Rwandan population continues to maintain a stubborn silence.

This natural, almost sacred, sense of obedience is mirrored by the trauma of those who took part in the genocide. "Every Hutu family has at least one murderer, just as there's at least one victim in every Tutsi family," says Anastase Murumba, a Rwandan official.

"Here you have a specific kind of traumatic experience," says Lincoln Ndogoni, a psychiatrist with the United States organisation World Vision. "The survivors are naturally traumatised, bitter and angry. They have fits of fear and depression. And the killers are traumatised too. They ask themselves questions, such as: 'Why did I kill?', 'Am I guilty?', 'If I killed five people, would I have been able to kill 10?'.

"Children killed people. They were given a machete and told to go and kill their neighbours. Women killed people and, something that's extremely rare in war, they killed children. At the moment I'm treating a Hutu woman who was married to a Tutsi, and who threw her own child into the river. Every day for the past three years, she has been going to the banks of the river — she can't understand what happened to her child.

"I'm also seeing a woman who tried to save her son by disguising him as a girl. The militiamen found her out and, to punish her, forced her to bury her boy alive. She cannot forget his last words: 'Mummy, stop playing, stop throwing earth in my face, stop playing.'

"Unless something is done, this country will become one huge psychiatric hospital in the next 10 or 20 years. The children of the genocide will turn into traumatised and maladjusted adults. What they will have learnt from the genocide is that they can't trust a government or an army, or their neighbours, friends or even their parents."

(March 31)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 12 1998

Lingering Questions

EDITORIAL

DEMOCRATS lost no time using the dismissal of Paula Jones' sexual harassment case to pressure independent counsel Kenneth Starr to wrap up his criminal investigation. The argument is somewhat muddled, but it seems to be that the public does not care much about the remaining allegations, that Mr. Starr's rather unpopular investigation has gone on too long already, and that the verdict provides a kind of global vindication for the president.

Mr. Starr should, like all independent counsels, conduct his probe as quickly as he can, but the suggestion that the dismissal of the Jones case should hasten or moot the rest of his investigation is wrongheaded. Mr. Starr has a series of questions before him that are of varying degrees of public importance but which all require answers before he can fold up shop. These questions include:

❑ Whether, as Mr. Starr's original mandate put it, "any individuals or entities have committed a violation of federal criminal law . . . relating in any way to James B. McDougal's, President William Jefferson Clinton's, or Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton's relationships" with Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan Association.

❑ Whether White House officials lied to investigators probing the firing of the White House Travel Office employees.

❑ Whether White House officials broke any laws when they acquired and hoarded hundreds of FBI background files on prominent Republicans.

❑ Whether the president committed perjury when he denied under oath groping Kathleen Willey and having a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

❑ Whether the president urged Ms. Lewinsky to submit a false affidavit to a federal court.

❑ Whether any White House official obstructed justice (or conspired to do so) by getting Ms. Lewinsky a job or by giving "talking points" to Linda Tripp to change her testimony concerning Ms. Willey's encounter with the president.

It is worth emphasizing that the importance of none of these questions depends on the merits of Ms. Jones' case. If it is important — and we believe that it is — for the public to know whether the president lied under oath and obstructed justice, it should not be less so because the president ultimately prevailed in the case.

Mr. Starr is in the unenviable position of running an investigation of a distasteful subject concerning the president in a politically charged environment while being, himself, under assault. He has done himself no favors with his extracurricular political activities, his occasionally inappropriate subpoenas and his almost-casual disregard for the appearance of impartiality. But neither these shortcomings nor the summary judgment in the Jones case should be read to prejudge the questions his investigation must ultimately answer. Mr. Starr's obligation remains unchanged: He needs to address the matters within his jurisdiction thoroughly and expeditiously.



President Clinton winds up his African tour in Senegal last week, where he heard of the dismissal of Paula Jones' case PHOTO: GREG GIBSON

U.N. Panel Calls for Halt To Execution

John M. Goshko in New York

IN A report certain to exacerbate the badly strained relations between the United Nations and Congress, the U.N. Human Rights Commission has concluded that the United States applies the death penalty unfairly, and called for a moratorium on further executions.

Specifically, the report says that some U.S. states carry out executions in an arbitrary and discriminatory manner that does not spare juveniles, the retarded or the mentally ill. It adds that these practices violate obligations imposed on the United States by various international agreements and says the federal government should halt all executions while it brings the states into compliance with international standards and law.

The report was written by Bacre Waly Ndiaye of Senegal, an investigator for the Geneva-based rights commission, who carried out a fact-finding mission in the United States last October that triggered considerable criticism from congressional conservatives. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, R-North Carolina, called Ndiaye's mission "an absurd U.N. charade."

"With all the abuses in places like Burma, China, Cuba and Iraq, to be wasting time and money to investigate the freest country in the world shows what a strange and distant planet the United Nations inhabits," Marc Thiessen, a spokesman for Helms said last week. "I hope the U.N. will send this report to every single U.S. citizen so they can see how their money is being spent by an institution so badly in need of top-to-bottom reform."

Helms' anger could have serious negative consequences for the effort to get the United States to pay more than $1 billion in debts to the United Nations. Helms has been at the center of efforts to broker a compromise on the payments, but he has been increasingly hostile to the world body and to Secretary General Kofi Annan, including him in a reference to "U.N. crybabies who whine about not receiving enough of the American taxpayers' money."

Since last month, when Annan went to Baghdad and negotiated an inspection agreement with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that staved off a U.S. threat of aerial attacks on Iraq, the secretary general has been criticized severely by congressional conservatives who saw his mission as appeasement.

Clinton administration officials said last week that they had not seen Ndiaye's report and could not comment on it. In the past, they had sought to play down its significance.

When he visited the United States last year, Ndiaye, a former official of Amnesty International, was rebuffed in efforts to interview Cabinet officials and Supreme Court justices. He talked only with officials of middle to low rank.

In his report, he said the United States was in violation of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which established conditions for the application of the death penalty.

Ex-Agent on Spy Charge

A DISGRUNTLED former CIA operative was charged last week with espionage for informing two foreign governments that U.S. intelligence agencies had cracked their secret communications and for revealing the methods for obtaining the codes, *write Roberto Suro and Peter Slevin*.

Douglas F. Groat, 50, of Manassas, Virginia, entered not guilty pleas to five charges, including two that carry a penalty of death. His alleged crimes "could have a significant impact on the national security," U.S. Attorney Wilma A. Lewis said after his arraignment.

During a 16-year career at the CIA, Groat "participated in classified covert operations" aimed at penetrating the secret codes and communications systems employed by foreign governments, Lewis said. He worked in units that broke codes and stole them and focused on both friendly and hostile governments, officials said.

Groat is charged with giving two unidentified governments classified information concerning the "targeting and compromise" of their "cryptographic systems" in March and April 1997, less than six months after he had been fired from the CIA.

A year earlier, the indictment says, he began an effort to extort more than $500,000 from the CIA in return for not revealing secrets to foreign governments.

Political Market Divided Over Money

COMMENT
Jim Hoagland

MONEY has become the overwhelming force of American politics, both as means and end. But Europe has taken a different route. National political battles in England, France and Germany are still fought along social and ideological lines that are being blurred or obliterated in the United States by the monetarization of politics.

The French right is at the moment deconstructing itself piecemeal in a struggle over racism, immigration and the meaning of the French past. Ideas — even confused ideas — are the driving impulses of French politics, not promises to balance the budget or to free the stock market to reach new heights. In Britain, concerns about social justice and management of the welfare system trumped the Conservatives' record of prosperity last year and helped Tony Blair's New Labor build a domineering parliamentary majority that may rule for a decade.

And in Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's opening campaign salvos which warned that his leftist opponents will run the economy into the ground if they win September's elections have fallen flat. The country's 13 percent unemployment rate hangs like an albatross around Kohl's neck, who for once faces a credible Social Democrat rival in Gerhard Schroeder.

The right in Europe's most important countries is being hollowed out at a time when conservatives are setting the agenda on this side of the Atlantic. The European right has failed to make the marketplace the arbiter and centerpiece of politics, as has progressively happened in America.

A sentiment of better-the-devil-we-don't-know is the biggest threat to Kohl in his run for a fourth term. Nothing he has tried has stopped or even slowed Germany's slide into economic quagmire.

Part of the European right's decline is generational. Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives and Kohl's Christian Democratic Union-led coalition first came to power nearly two decades ago. Ambitious and competent younger politicians had to go into opposition to see daylight. Another part of the decline is tactical: France's neo-Gaullists and their pro-business allies on the right have blundered into a series of separate but related traps set by the Socialists and the extremist right-wing forces led by Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front, and squandered the political and moral authority they once possessed.

But the crisis of confidence Europe's conservatives are experiencing also illuminates the success their nominal counterparts in America have had in redefining the tools and terms of politics.

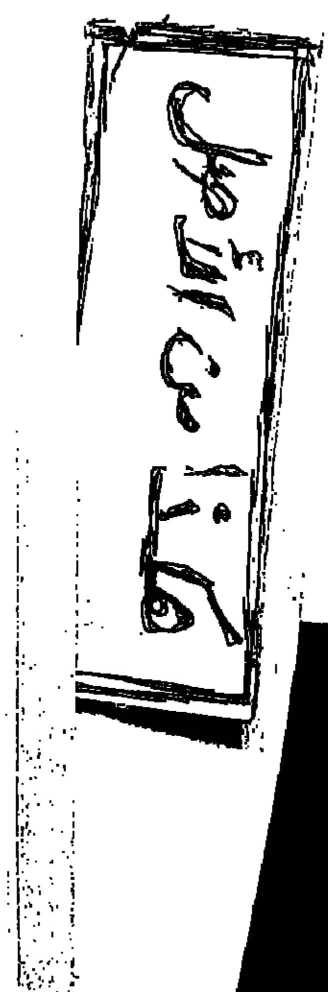
Money is being depoliticized in Europe as the technocrats of the European Union use treaty commitments and continental monetary units to regulate national budget deficits, monetary supply and much of fiscal policy. National assemblies yield powers to Brussels so they can also shed the risks of unpopular spending cuts and/or new taxes.

This supranational financial discipline, which Blair has said Britain wants to join in a few years, deprives European conservatives of their heaviest ideological artillery. They have not found a convincing replacement for the now waning subliminal assumption by the electorate that the right exists to grow the economy through superior financial expertise. For better or worse, the arrival of the euro currency will vastly increase the disconnect between politics and money in Europe.

But in America the marketplace of campaign finance increasingly rules the lives of politicians in each election, and the behavior of the stock market weighs heavily on the scales of their fate in office.

Pocketbook issues have always been paramount in American politics. But other matters — social justice, the integrity of our leaders, U.S. leadership in the world, to name a few — have perhaps never been driven so far to the margins of the national attention span and political discourse by material concerns as they are today.

In America's current politics of bread and circus, Europeans almost certainly find more to envy than they have at any time since World War II — and less to admire.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Police Chief Arrested In Chiapas

John Ward Anderson
in Mexico City

A TOP police official from the southern Mexican state of Chiapas was arrested last week for standing by and doing nothing in December last year as a group of armed men massacred 45 unarmed peasants in the hillside hamlet of Acteal, the attorney-general's office said in an statement.

Julio Cesar Santiago Diaz, a retired army general serving as chief of staff of the Chiapas state police and head of the state's auxiliary police force, was in the area with other police officers for five hours while the massacre occurred, the statement said. "He heard sporadic gunshots and machine-gun bursts, but he did not intervene or ask for help from a nearby police detachment," it said.

Instead, Santiago hid in the Acteal schoolhouse and reported to his superiors that nothing unusual was happening, the statement said.

Santiago is the highest-ranking official detained so far in connection with the massacre, which brought renewed attention to the conflict and stalled peace negotiations in Chiapas. A cease-fire has held in the impoverished state since indigenous rebels known as "Zapatistas" staged a rebellion on January 1, 1994, demanding greater indigenous rights. More than 140 people were killed in the 10-day revolt.

Survivors of the Acteal massacre — the worst violence since the opening days of the conflict — said that their attackers were members of an armed paramilitary-style group aligned with Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party. The survivors said that they themselves are members of a group called Las Abejas, or the Bees, that supports the goals of the Zapatista uprising but not its armed struggle.

It was unclear why Santiago was in the vicinity of Acteal on the day of the attack, and the attorney-general's office refused to elaborate beyond the one-page statement. The statement did not say why Santiago would report that nothing was happening when he was in the midst of a bloodbath that left 21 women, 15 children and nine men dead, raising the question of whether Santiago could have organized or participated in the attack.

Numerous human rights groups, social workers and Catholic Church officials have said that in the weeks before the massacre, and on the day of the attack, they warned the government that serious trouble was brewing, but that the government did nothing to reduce tensions or stop the assault. The incident forced the resignations of Mexico's interior minister and the Chiapas governor and state attorney-general.

It also was unclear when Santiago served with the Mexican army and when he began working with the Chiapas police. Both institutions refused last week to answer questions about his service record.

The federal attorney-general's office also announced that it had arrested an active army soldier, Mariano Perez Ruiz, for allegedly supplying army weapons and training to the attackers, some of whom were from Peréz's hometown near Acteal.

Neither Santiago nor Perez has yet been charged.



A BOY holds a Martin Luther King Jr. sign at a march in Memphis, Tennesse, last week to mark the 30th anniversary of the assassination of the civil rights leader.

On Monday President Clinton asked Attorney General Janet Reno to discuss with King's family their request for a new investigation into the shooting.

A congressional committee and several law enforcement agencies have concluded that King was killed on April 4, 1968, by James Earl Ray, acting alone. Ray confessed to the crime but almost immediately recanted.

Speaking at the "pilgrimage" in Memphis, Rev. Jesse Jackson joined calls by King's widow for the appointment of a federal commission to investigate the murder. Last week Coretta Scott King publicly called on President Clinton to press for the examination of "new evidence". King family members have speculated that the FBI was involved.

PHOTOGRAPH ANDREW CUTRARO

Clinton Presses Japan on Economy

Paul Blustein

JAPAN came under intensified pressure last week to rescue its faltering economy as the country's gold-plated credit rating was called into question. Tokyo stocks fell anew and President Clinton warned that Japanese officials "have to make a break" with their past policies.

Moody's Investors Service, an influential U.S. bond rating firm, delivered a psychological blow to Tokyo by announcing that it had changed its outlook on Japan's government debt from "stable" to "negative." Although the company maintained its triple-A rating on Japanese government-backed bonds, even the hint that it might downgrade Tokyo's government obligations underscored the mounting sense of pessimism over Japan's prospects.

The announcement came one day after Sony Corp. chairman Norio Ohga voiced his fear that the Japanese economy was "on the verge of collapsing," and a quarterly survey of Japanese business sentiment found that confidence had plunged.

The cascade of bad news dropped the Nikkei-225 Stock Average to 15,517.78, putting stock prices uncomfortably close to levels at which Japanese banks will find it tough to meet international capital requirements because a significant portion of their capital is invested in the stock market. The yen fell to a 6-year low against the dollar, closing at 135.10.

The deepening gloom in Tokyo raised fears in Washington and other capitals that the world's second-largest economy is headed for a worse recession than the stagnant growth it has suffered for most of the past seven years. That would come at a particularly inopportune time for crisis-stricken Asian countries, which depend on Japan as a market for their exports.

President Clinton weighed in with comments reflecting U.S. concerns that time is rapidly running out on the government of Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who is struggling to mobilize a consensus by mid-May among ruling-party politicians and the powerful bureaucracy about measures to stimulate the economy.

Washington has been prodding Tokyo with increasing urgency to boost domestic consumption because U.S. officials fear that Japan exporting its way out of its troubles will impose a drag on the global economy and hurt U.S. industries that compete with Japanese firms.

"We need to be both respectful but firm in urging the Japanese to take a bold course," Clinton said. He called on the Japanese government "to realize that the strategies that worked in the past are not appropriate to the present. They have to make a break now."

The reasons for Japan's predicament are complicated. Hashimoto has staked his political fortunes on a policy emphasizing tight control over government budget deficits on the grounds that a rapidly aging Japan needs to avoid borrowing and increase saving to prepare for retirement costs in the next century.

That approach has made it awkward for the prime minister to reverse course even after it became clear that a consumption-tax increase he promoted a year ago was causing the already-fragile economy to lose steam.

U.S. administration officials and many private analysts argue that Japan must take drastic action to rid its banks of hundreds of billions of dollars in bad loans so they can lend more freely. The country has a long tradition of banks keeping weak borrowers alive.

A Japanese economics professor, Takatoshi Ito of Hitotsubashi University, agreed that Moody's move, combined with the slide in Tokyo stock prices and deterioration in business confidence, would help force Hashimoto's hand. "I think the government will take it seriously," he said. "It's the market, and the businesses, pressing the government to do something — I think the government will respond to it. I hope they do."

In London, where he was attending a meeting of European and Asian leaders, Hashimoto acknowledged "various concerns from abroad . . . regarding the state of the Japanese economy." But, he said, "Japan will take the necessary measures and, at the same time, provide assistance to the countries of Asia as well."

Pipe Bombs Become Toys for Teens

Fern Shen

MAKING a pipe bomb is a cinch, a group of bomb-savvy junior high school boys said one afternoon recently, after stepping off the school bus into their newish subdivision in northern Montgomery County, Maryland.

"It's easy. A kid in fifth grade could do it," a 14-year-old wearing an oversized trench coat said matter-of-factly. Much more interesting to this group in Germantown were discussions of which propellants are best to use, which Web sites have the best recipes and whether tin or aluminum soda cans make better bomb casings.

"I go over to this auto shop, where they sell parts and everything, and look for anything with ether in it . . . That makes a nice blast," said a 13-year-old in baggy pants.

The casual discussion illustrates a frightening trend: Young people in many parts of the country have been making sophisticated explosive devices in increasing numbers since the early 1990s, and bringing them into their schools in many cases, say bomb experts, education associations and officials at the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. And evidence shows they're not just being made as childish pranks, but as weapons that are intended to destroy and even kill.

"These cases are starting to cross the line from 'boys will be boys' to real attempts to cause injury," said David Kysilko, a spokesman for the National Association of State Boards of Education, which is concerned about the apparent increase in teenage bomb-making activity.

The recent discovery of a powerful pipe bomb in Montgomery County's Rocky Hill Middle School is a case in point. On February 27 the school was evacuated after a bomb was found in a student's locker. Prosecutors say 14-year-old Domingo Luyo Jr. intended to use the device, which another student built, to kill his grandfather.

Such incidents began to crop up with alarming frequency in the early 1990s, according to the ATF, prompting the bureau's statisticians to begin tracking them. They found that youths were involved in a disproportionate share — 33 percent — of the fast-rising total number of U.S. bombing cases, which doubled between 1985 and 1995.

Juvenile bombings increased from 774 in 1992, the first year the ATF began tracking such cases, to 1,126 in 1994. That number declined to 931 in 1995, the most recent year for which figures are available, but officials say they think the numbers will continue to rise.

Experts say the reasons for the trend remain murky, but they cite the availability of detailed bomb-making instructions on the Internet, parents' inattentiveness, and high-profile cases such as the Olympic Park bombing in Atlanta, abortion clinic attacks and the activities of the so-called Unabomber as factors that may have captured youths' interest.

Bombs apparently are becoming so common that students give them as gifts. Last October, a 13-year-old from Corvallis, Oregon, gave a classmate a flower and a gift-wrapped pipe bomb for her birthday and instructions on how to use it.

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New Wave of Immigrants Tests a Dream

William Booth

AT THE beginning of this century, as steamers poured into American ports, their steerage filled with European immigrants, a Jew from England named Zangwill penned a play whose line has long been forgotten, but whose central theme has not. The production was entitled The Melting Pot and its message still has a tremendous power on the national imagination — the promise that all immigrants can be transformed into Americans, a new alloy forged in a crucible of democracy, freedom and civic responsibility.

In 1908, when the play opened in Washington, the United States was in the middle of absorbing the greatest influx of immigrants in its history — Irish and Germans, followed by Italians and East Europeans, Catholics and Jews — some million new citizens between and 1920.

Today, the United States is experiencing its second great wave of immigration, a movement of people that has profound implications for a society that by tradition pays homage to its immigrant roots while at the same time it confronts complex and deeply ingrained ethnic and racial divisions.

The immigrants of today come not from Europe but overwhelmingly from the still developing world of Asia and Latin America. They are creating a demographic shift so rapid that within the lifetimes of today's teenagers, no one ethnic group — including whites of European descent — will comprise a majority of the nation's population.

The shift, according to social scientists, demographers and others studying the trends, will severely test the premise of the fabled melting pot, the idea, so central to national identity, that this country can transform people of every color and background into "one America." Just as possible, they say, is that the nation will continue to fracture into many separate, disconnected communities with no shared sense of commonality or purpose. Perhaps it will evolve into something in between, a pluralistic society that will hold on to some core ideas about citizenship and capitalism, but with little meaningful interaction among groups.

The demographic changes raise questions about political and economic power. Will that power, now held disproportionately by whites, be shared in the new America? What will happen when Hispanics overtake blacks as the nation's single largest minority?

Fear of strangers, of course, is nothing new in American history. The last great immigration wave produced a bitter backlash, epitomized by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the return, in the 1920s, of the Ku Klux Klan, which not only targeted blacks but Catholics, Jews and immigrants as well.

Despite this strife, many historians argue that there was a greater consensus in the past on what it meant to be an American, a yearning for a common language and culture, and a desire to assimilate. Today, they say, there is more emphasis on preserving one's ethnic identity, of finding ways to highlight and defend one's cultural roots. The question is whether, in the midst of such change, there is also enough glue to hold Americans together.

In high school cafeterias, the second and third generation children of immigrants clump together in cliques defined by where their parents or grandparents were born. At the law school of the University of California at Los Angeles, which has about 1,000 students, there are separate student associations for blacks, Latinos and Asians with their own law review journal.

It almost goes without saying that today's new arrivals are a source of vitality and energy, especially in the big cities to which many are attracted. Diversity, almost everyone agrees, is good; choice is good; exposure to different cultures and ideas is good.

But many scholars worry about the loss of community and shared sense of reality among Americans, what Todd Gitlin, a professor of culture and communications at New York University, calls "the twilight of common dreams." The concern is echoed by many on both the left and right, and of all ethnicities, but no one seems to know exactly what to do about it.

Researchers already speak of a new "demographic balkanization," not only of residential segregation, forced or chosen but also a powerful preference to see ourselves through a racial prism, wary of others, and, in many instances, hostile.

The demographic shifts are smudging the old lines demarcating two historical, often distinct societies, one black and one white. Reshaped by three decades of rapidly rising immigration, the national story is now far more complicated.

Whites account for 74 percent of the population, blacks 12 percent, Hispanics 10 percent and Asians 3 percent. Yet according to data and predictions generated by the U.S. Census Bureau and social scientists poring over the numbers, Hispanics will likely surpass blacks early in the next century. And by the year 2050, demographers predict, Hispanics will account for 25 percent of the population, blacks 14 percent, Asians 8 percent, with whites hovering somewhere around 53 percent.

CONGRESS triggered this transformation in 1965, when it made family reunification the primary criteria for admittance. That policy, a response to charges that the law favored white Europeans, allowed immigrants already in the country to bring over their relatives, who in turn could bring over more relatives. As a result, America has been absorbing as many as 1 million newcomers a year, to the point that now almost one in every 10 residents is foreign born.

The intake, relative to the overall population, was slightly higher at the beginning of this century, but the current immigration wave is in many ways very different, and its context inexorably altered, from the last great wave.

Cubans in Miami: Hispanics will likely outnumber blacks early in the next century PHOTO DON McPHEE

This time around, tensions are sharpened by the changing profile of those who are entering America's borders. Not only are their racial and ethnic backgrounds more varied than in decades past, their place in a modern postindustrial economy has also been recast.

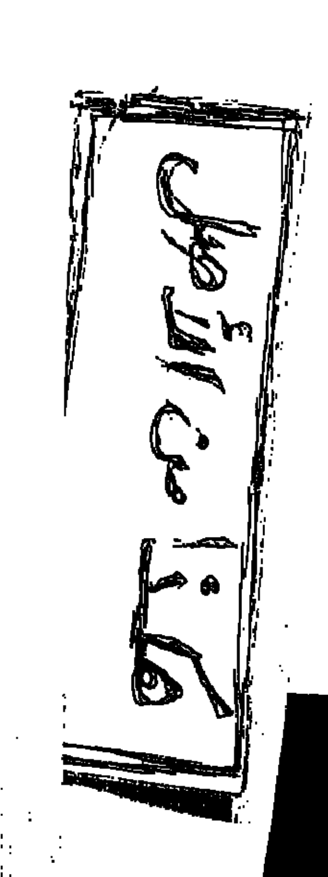
The newly arrived today can be roughly divided into two camps: those with college degrees and highly specialized skills, and those with almost no education or job training. Some 12 percent of immigrants have graduate degrees, compared to 8 percent of native Americans. But more than one-third of the immigrants have no high school diploma, double the rate for those born in the United States. About 6 percent of new arrivals receive some form of welfare, double the rate for U.S.-born citizens.

With large numbers of immigrants arriving from Latin America, and segregating in barrios, there is also evidence of lingering language problems. Consider that in Miami, three-quarters of residents speak a language other than English at home and 67 percent of those say they are not fluent in English. In New York City, four of every 10 residents speak a language other than English at home, and of these, half said they do not speak English well.

It is clear that not all of America is experiencing the impact of immigration equally. But as the immigrants arrive, many American-born citizens leave in search of new homes in more homogeneous locales. New York and Los Angeles each lost more than 1 million native-born residents between 1990 and 1995, even as their populations increased by roughly the same numbers with immigrants. To oversimplify, said University of Michigan demographer William Frey, "For every Mexican who comes to Los Angeles, a white native-born leaves."

Most of the people leaving the big cities are white and they tend to be working class. This is an entirely new kind of "white flight," whereby whites are not just fleeing the city centers for the suburbs but also are leaving the region, and often the state.

Frey sees in this pattern "the emergence of separate Americas, one white and middle-aged, less urban and another intensely urban, young, multicultural and multiethnic. One America will care deeply about English as the official language and about preserving Social Security. The other will care about things like retaining affirmative action and bilingual education."



Race Helps Soccer Score Over Old Sports

Howard Schneider in Toronto

THE ROYAL Canadian Curling Club enjoyed plenty of banner days during its first 100 years. Ontario provincial champs in 1981 and again in 1986. Senior team champs in 1992. Winners of the Walton Challenge Cup in 1938. With leagues for kids, seniors and stay-at-home moms, a comfortable lounge and regular "bonspiel" tournaments with other curling groups, the club also served as a social center for the downtown neighborhood of Riverdale, a working example of how Canada's loosely constructed culture sustains itself.

These days, however, the members of "The Royals" are spending as much time discussing survival and cultural change as talking about when their club might produce its next provincial. Membership is down roughly 50 percent, and the club's finances are so tenuous the owners are debating whether to close.

The sport of curling, in which large, smooth rocks are slid shuffleboard-style across a sheet of ice toward a bull's-eye, is as popular as ever in Canada, a de facto national pastime for adults.

Rather, it's a reflection of how Canada's increasingly interracial reality is reshaping the country's major cities. It may have been natural, first for the English and Scots, and later the Latvians and Ukrainians, to embrace a sport that blended sliding across the ice on your knees with lots of time to socialize. It has proved much tougher for the Royals to find an audience among the Asian residents who have created one of Toronto's three Chinatowns a few blocks from the Royals' rink.

Curling's following is "basically . . . the old-style Canadian," said Royals president Dave Craddock. Drive through almost any small Canadian town, he said, and "There's almost always a liquor store, a [Royal Canadian] Legion and a curling club, usually within close proximity."

Those towns are almost all white, according to newly released information from a Statistics Canada census that for the first time asked Canadians about their race. With the advent of employment equity laws, multicultural programs and other policies whose monitoring requires race-specific data, Canadian census officials decided they should unambiguously identify what are referred to here as "visible minorities."

The data confirmed that Canada's image as an increasingly diverse and multicultural society ends at the boundaries of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, major cities where nearly 75 percent of the country's nonwhite population lives. Half of Canada's 10 provinces have minority populations of less then 4 percent, and three of only 1 percent.

Overall, the portion of Canada's population that is nonwhite is half that of the United States: about 11 percent, or roughly 3.2 million people. Nearly half are Chinese or South Asian; about 570,000 are black.

"The notion of Canada as a tolerant, multiracial, multilingual society is part and parcel of the way we have defined ourselves," said Robert Glossop, executive director of programs for the Vanier Institute on the Family. "However, up until recently, Canada has never been put to the test to really deliver . . . This diverse cultural complexion is not equally spread across the country."

That's a fact that the Royals, now in the middle of a city that is nearly one-third nonwhite, must cope with if they are to survive, Craddock said.

Across town, in a cavernous airplane hangar that has been converted into an indoor soccer complex, Francois Glasman is coping with the opposite problem: how to accommodate nearly 300 teams of men, women and children from around the world who want to play on the five artificial-turf fields he developed at the old Downsview military base.

More Canadians are registered in soccer leagues now than in hockey leagues, and on any given night you can hear them at Glasman's facility, encouraging each other in Arabic, Spanish and, yes, English.

"Way back, Canadians used to call soccer an ethnic game," Glasman said. "No more . . . This has very much a world soccer flavor. When people are here, they could be in Brazil or Italy or France or England. The pot has really melted. The fact that you hear many languages — that is the fabric of our society."

Genetic Destiny

Robin Marantz Henig

MENDEL'S DWARF
By Simon Mawer
Harmony. 293 pp. $23

FROM the very beginning of this stunning novel, we know that the narrator, Dr. Benedict Lambert, is a dwarf. But it's hard sometimes to reconcile Lambert's voice — sardonic, sarcastic, erudite, incisive, unbearably clever, and horny as hell — with the brutal facts of his physique. "He possesses a massive forehead and blunt, pug-like features," Lambert writes in the dispassionate third person. "His nose is stove in at the bridge, his mouth and jaw protrude. His limbs are squat and bowed, his fingers are mere squabs. He is one meter, twenty-seven centimeters tall." Whenever Lambert walks through the streets, people stare. "You get used to it," he says, unconvincingly.

But inside this misshapen form is a brilliant mind, and Lambert is a genetic researcher of international renown. He is also the great-great-great nephew of Gregor Mendel, the Moravian monk who discovered the laws of genetic inheritance in 1865. Driven not so much by this familial link as by his own genetic disaster, Lambert spends his career searching for the gene for achondroplasia, the form of dwarfism from which he suffers. The gene is autosomal dominant, meaning that anyone who carries it has a 50-50 chance of having a dwarf child. This makes it an unpopular target for genetic research, since all the real research funding goes into explaining recessive traits like cystic fibrosis. "Recessives play on people's anxieties," Lambert's boss explains. "They can spend a whole lifetime worrying whether they're carriers, and then we come along and offer them a test."

Woven through the novel is the tale of Gregor Mendel, who made his discovery in the course of eight years' worth of work with sweet peas — only to have his work completely ignored during his lifetime. Simon Mawer, an Oxford-trained zoologist, biology teacher and novelist, knows Mendel's sad little story impeccably, and he tells it quite beautifully. The passages about Mendel's life, combined with clear and cogent information about contemporary genetics (including footnotes and website URLs), add a richness to the novel, which is at its heart about the vicissitudes of chance as seen through one randomly cruel toss of the genetic dice.

After a tortured lifetime of study, research and unrelenting loneliness, Lambert finally finds the gene he's been searching for. He also finds Jean (the name's a pun), a librarian at the institute where he works. The two have an intense, bizarre love affair when Jean briefly leaves her boorish husband — an affair that is sexually quite fulfilling, Lambert repeatedly assures us, involving as it does "the one part of me that is the normal size."

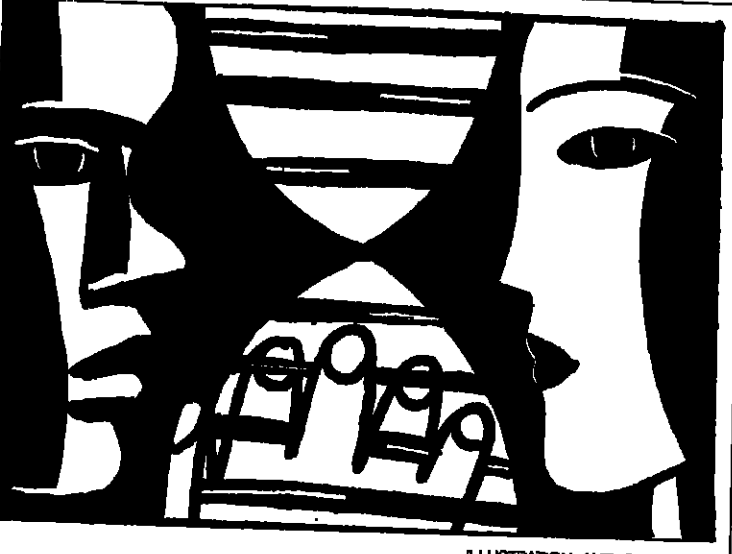


ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

When the affair ends, Jean decides to try to fix her childless marriage by having a baby — Lambert's baby, as it turns out, whom she can pass off as the child of her infertile husband. But her plan depends on genetic certainty, something that the reader already knows is impossible. Jean wants Lambert to screen the fertilized eggs that the two of them produce through in vitro fertilization, and then selectively implant only the one that is free of the gene for achondroplasia.

Reluctantly and out of love, Lambert agrees. But as he peers into the microscope surveying the perfect Mendelian proportions of his progeny — four out of eight embryos carrying the dwarf gene, the other four normal, "one of Uncle Gregor's ratios" — he faces an ethical crisis. "God allows pure luck to decide whether a mutant child or a normal child shall be born," he muses. "But Benedict Lambert has the possibility of beating God's proxy and overturning the tables of chance." How tempting it would be to "close my eyes and pick one out at random," he says, in effect playing on Jean and on their child "the kind of practical joke . . . that life played on me."

Although the book falls apart in the last 50 pages, it is overall a remarkable performance. Lambert's voice is distinctive, unique and often downright chilling; it grabs you by the throat and dares you to admit to your own revulsion, combined with guilty gratitude, when you see him in all his grotesquerie. And it reminds us, again and again, of how much about us is due to chance, and how little about our genes we truly understand.

Freedom Rides Into Harm's Way

Melissa Fay Greene

THE CHILDREN
By David Halberstam
Random House. 783 pp. $29.95

IT IS a great season for readers of serious nonfiction. Two long-awaited, bigger-than-life, multitudinous works of civil rights history, starring famous Americans and casts of hundreds, are here: Taylor Branch's incomparable Pillar Of Fire and now David Halberstam's uneven but stirring The Children. Halberstam's 783-page tome tells a more narrowly focused story than Branch's 746-page one, for while Branch has within his sights the entire era, with an encyclopedic grasp of politics, locales and personalities, Halberstam is interested chiefly in the hearts and minds of the movement's student leaders.

On May 20, 1961, 20 black and white college students aboard a Greyhound bus, self-styled "Freedom Riders," carried their campaign to desegregate interstate bus terminals into an ominously quiet Montgomery, Alabama. "It was late Saturday morning," Halberstam writes, "virtually the middle of the day, a time when any Southern city was crowded. Yet not a soul was moving. No one was walking on the streets, nor were any cars about. The bus made a big, lazy swing into the station. There was no one there. It was like pulling into a ghost bus station in a ghost town. As they prepared to get off the bus, Bernard Lafayette knew something was wrong."

A few of the passengers already had been attacked by a mob at the Birmingham station on May 14 — Police Chief Bull Connor later would explain that the absence of police was due to their celebrating Mother's Day. Outside Anniston, Alabama, that same day, another bus was forced off the road and set aflame, with the young Freedom Riders barricaded inside: "Well, boys, here they are. I brought you some niggers and nigger-lovers," the bus driver had called out to the mob; as the students began choking inside the bus, they heard rioters yelling, "Let's roast the niggers!" By the time the replacement bus draws into eerie Montgomery, midway through The Children, the students, not fooled by the city's silence, once again have prepared themselves for the possibility that they are about to die at the hands of a mob.

Halberstam delivers these oft-told chronicles and famously photographed scenes with freshness and immediacy, through the eyes of the dozen young people who formed the nucleus of leadership in the nascent civil rights movement — the religious, passionately driven, unpredictable, inventive founders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, who led sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and voter registration drives, putting their bodies at risk, their college educations on hold, and their parents in a panic. But the group's collected tales have not been assembled quite like this before. Halberstam offers biographies of most of the major protagonists, so that the reader is aware of the inner ground covered by each of "the children" who abandoned their lecture halls, dormitories, and campus fraternities and signed up for suicide missions into the Deep South. The reader has been well-informed of the poor or working-class parents back home on the farm, who desperately scrabbled together the means to finance these sons' and daughters' college educations, and who now must cope with the reality that these brilliant children, these star students, these scholarship winners, have bent their talents to nothing less than overturning the old order, the Southern Way of Life.

Not only must the generation of black parents symbolically stand aside as their young people take up the struggle, but also the tyranny of the older generation of whites begins to slip. The students magically attract the brand-new medium of nightly television news; they comprehend the notion of a "sound bite" decades before the word is coined; and, with news crews following them everywhere and relaying images of the brutal attacks on them, they win the attention and sympathy of the majority of TV-viewing Americans and, finally, of the Kennedy White House.

One reads the book gripping it with both hands, almost afraid to turn the page

To accomplish all this, however, they must become fodder — not for cannons but for cameras — by luring the hidden beast of racism out of hiding, and so they disembark. "The silence which greeted them in Montgomery was the exact same silence which had greeted the first riders when they had reached Anniston, the terribly unnatural quiet just before the storm. Lewis got off the bus [and] had just begun to answer questions from the various reporters when he saw the mob, coming, it seemed, out of nowhere, moving at them quickly and angrily. They went for the journalists first, particularly the photographers. Lewis was startled by the violence of it. These were men and women who had turned into animals.

"All around Lewis, people were sprawled on the ground, some being beaten, some, having already been beaten, just lying there; he had a sense that this must be what a battlefield was like. Lewis could not believe the rage. It was obscene, frenzied, accompanied by an odd sound, a communal roar of anger."

While Branch's book unfolds as a stunningly detailed chronology, Halberstam's builds upon feelings — a more nebulous realm for a journalist, even for such a justly celebrated journalist as this one, and a slightly more confusing approach for a reader. Also odd, for a book so devoted to the protagonists' emotions and impressions, is the fact that practically the only voice in the book is Halberstam's. In his research, the author conducted hundreds of in-depth interviews with key players. Yet out of this rich hoard of material, he very rarely finds the voices and quotations of others to be worth including. He tells everyone's life story for them. The Children is like a magnificent work of oral history, with the peculiar drawback that every idiosyncrasy of voice, accent and intonation has been blended into the narrator's long, uninflected, almost uninterrupted monologue.

Nevertheless, within this book live stories of timeless heroism, poignancy and power, so that one's reaction, finally, is that here is an embarrassment of riches. Included here are stories so fraught with hatred and hope, violence and suffering, fear and courage, that one reads the book gripping it with both hands, almost afraid to turn the page.

Hardcovers In Brie[f]

Nonfiction

Monk, by Laurent de Wild[e], translated by Jonathan Dickinson (Marlowe, $22...)

A JAZZ pianist who has r[...] six albums of his own, [...] de Wilde brings a musici[...] spective to this appreciation [...] legend Thelonius Monk. The [...] sets the scene in New York, [...] Monk's family moved when [...] a small child. There, in the [...] Monk launched himself on the [...] scene and bebop was born. [...] playing and in that of Dizzy [...] spie, Charlie Parker and othe[...] the late Forties, when the [...] pers called him the "High Pri[...] Bebop," Monk used to pla[...] 'pump' with the left hand, [...] pure stride tradition (a bas[...] alternating every other beat [...] chord), for maximum swing [...] the advantage of this techn[...] you have an open-enough [...] that the right hand is free [...] whatever it wants. Monk [...] into this opening . . . creating [...] rhythms, and figures with a [...] hand as free as the breeze. Th[...] hand was classic, and the righ[...] modern. Take away the left [...] and there would be the M[...] 20 years later. Remove the [...] and it would be back to the [...] 20 years earlier."

In Search of Islamic Feminis[m]: One Woman's Global Journe[y] by Elizabeth Warnock Fern[ea] (Doubleday, $24.95)

IS THERE such a thing as Is[...] feminism? Elizabeth Fern[ea] [...] out to answer that question. [...] erners, hearing stories of re[...] sion and used to seeing pictur[es] [...] Muslim women veiled from hea[d to] toe, tend to disbelieve that the [...] cept of women's equality exists [...] in the Islamic world. The reali[ty] [...] course, is far more complex [...] that, as Fernea found over [...] course of two years' worth of [...] to Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, K[...] Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan [...] the United States. In each place [...] interviewed women of diffe[...] backgrounds and experiences, [...] highly politicized activists to [...] tional wives and mothers.

Remaking the World: Adventures in Engineering, [by] Henry Petroski (Knopf, $24)

ONE of the adventuresome [...] neers celebrated by Henry P[et]roski is Henry Martyn Robert, [...] deviser of Robert's Rules of Or[der]. The South Carolina-born Rob[ert] went to West Point and made [...] career in the Army Corps of E[ngi]neers, where as a young ma[n] [...] found himself perplexed by [...] inability to run a proper meeti[ng]. When he investigated, however, [...] found that his shortcoming was [...] cusable: There was no agreed-[...] readily accessible method for [...] general public, so he borrow[ed] [...] from the procedures of Parlia[ment], the U.S. House of Representativ[es] and the U.S. Senate to write a [...] book that he first published [...] Since then the book has [...] through nine editions, but as P[et]roski notes, "Like the foundati[on of] a well-conceived jetty or seawall, [...] the defining concept of the e[...] neer's original edition of Robert's Rules continues to give the work [...] evolved its lasting character [...] value. And the name of the ge[...] ally forgotten engineer has bec[ome] one with his work."

Norway manages to keep the faith

Larry Elliott finds an antidote to those who argue that globalisation dealt a mortal blow to social democracy

THE trouble with social democracy is simple. Over the past 20 years social democrats [ha]ve thought like Norwegians but [act]ed like New Zealanders. There [wa]s a time this would scarcely have [ma]ttered since both were shining [be]acons of the post-war social con[tr]act, and Norway could almost be [de]scribed as the New Zealand of the [No]rth Atlantic.

But since the early 1980s the [pa]ths of these two nations have [...]ated somewhat. Norway remains [a d]eeply pre-monetarist redoubt, so [mu]ch so that Keynesian demand [man]agement is not a museum piece [bu]t the whole basis on which eco[no]mic policy is run. Wages are con[tro]lled not by the crude instrument [of h]igher unemployment but by an [in]comes policy known as the Stabil[ity] Alternative.

New Zealand, by contrast, has [bec]ome a laboratory for every [cra]ckpot *laissez-faire* notion consid[er]ed too extreme to be road-tested [eve]n in Thatcher's Britain or Rea[ga]n's America. The International [Mon]etary Fund, the Organisation [fo]r Economic Co-operation and [De]velopment and just about every [oth]er part of the new world order [lov]e the way Wellington has slashed [wel]fare, given the central bank [gov]ernor a binding contract to hit [a]n inflation target and removed [le]gal recognition from unions.

Growth has been sluggish, unem[plo]yment remains high, the increase [in] inequality has been unmatched [ac]ross the Western world.

Little matter; its supporters say [Ne]w Zealand can still teach us a [thi]ng or two. For example, far from [su]ggesting that the recent blackout [in] Auckland was the result of sack[in]g engineers to save money, the [We]st should be focusing on how the [ow]ners of the privatised energy [co]mpany enhanced shareholder [va]lue by downsizing its cost base.

So much, so obvious. The 1980s [we]re the decade of rightwing hege[mo]ny across most of the West. Of [th]e G7 nations, only France had a [lef]t government, and even there François Mitterrand had to suffer pe[rio]ds of cohabitation with the right.

The late 1990s, by contrast, have seen the right in retreat. Of the four big economies in Europe the left holds or shares power in three, and may make it a full house when Germany goes to the polls in the autumn. The Democrats have occupied the White House since 1992.

Funnily enough, few policymakers in London, Washington, Rome or Paris are beating a path to Oslo, where the government appears to be breaking every conceivable rule of the new paradigm.

For a start, Norway is making no attempt to "modernise" its welfare state in the prescribed Clintonesque fashion of ending "welfare as we know it", which means dragooning the poor and the jobless into low-paid work. On the contrary, the government in Oslo has the rather old-fashioned belief that generous maternity leave, decent pensions and unemployment pay at rather more than subsistence level are badges of a civilised country.

There are other features of the Norwegian way that are inimical to the basic tenets of the new global model. There has been a carbon tax since 1991, forcing companies to be more energy efficient. There is a vigorous regional policy. But it is Norway's apostasy when it comes to economic policy that really sticks in the throat of the *laissez-faire* gurus because, far from signing up to the neo-liberal plan of inflation targeting, deregulated pay bargaining, weak unions and a spurning of Keynesian demand management, the Norwegian government acts as if Milton Friedman had never existed.

Policy, says the ministry of finance, "is geared towards maintaining stable economic growth consistent with low price and wage inflation, while gradually achieving reductions in unemployment". Monetary policy is confined to keeping the exchange rate stable, while the central role of regulating growth is given to fiscal policy. The Stability Alternative completes the picture. This is corporatism in all its glory, with centralised pay bargaining designed to ensure that the externally traded sector remains internationally competitive. The main labour organisation is seen not as the enemy but as an important social partner that can ensure wage moderation across the whole economy.



The baleful results of this heresy are there for all to see — growth over the past five years at double the European average, full employment and price stability. Of the three traditional tests of social democracy — jobs for all, reducing inequality and increasing democratic control over the economy — Norway passes them all.

Of course there are those who argue that social democracy is a luxury that Norway can afford because it has all that lovely North Sea oil. Up to a point that is true. But the non-oil economy in Norway is also booming, rising, on average, by 3.5 per cent a year since 1994. The lion's share of the oil money is being put into a special fund and invested abroad rather than being squandered — as was Britain's — on tax cuts.

There is a risk that it will all end in tears. Some policy makers worry that Norway is heading for a classic boom-bust cycle. There is certainly a need to tighten fiscal policy aggressively to compensate for the stimulative impact of monetary policy.

Nevertheless Norway provides a useful antidote to those who argue that globalisation has sounded the death knell for social democracy. The problem for social democrats is that if they spurn the lessons of the Norwegian model they will be drawn inexorably towards a version of what is being offered in the southern hemisphere.

It's no good the left just thinking like Norwegians. It must act like Norwegians too.

Bulls charge into bear year

Mark Tran

THE vertiginous rise of the United States stock market, especially during the past three years, has forced many analysts to eat humble pie. Even the most optimistic gurus did not foresee the Dow Jones hitting the 9,000 level so soon; now some are already talking of a Dow 10,000 before the year is out.

Last week cheers rang around on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange as the Dow's Industrial Average crossed the 9,000 mark for the first time, but there is little sense of celebration among the pundits.

The higher the Dow climbs, the more they fret. As the respected US investor Warren Buffett remarked in his annual report, punters should buy shares when prices are low, not when they are rising. Yet buyers are piling into the market, more fearful of missing the party than of any possible losses. Mr Buffett reassured investors when he declared that the market was not overvalued, but he also noted the lack of bargains — hence his foray into silver.

Danger signals are flashing in the market. Last week the Sony chairman, Norio Ohga, warned that the Japanese economy was on the verge of collapse, and threatening to trigger a global recession.

In the short term the Asian financial crisis has served as a safety valve for a US economy in danger of overheating. Because of Asia's economic woes, the US economy is expected to grow by only 2 per cent this year, 1 per cent less than previous forecasts. Asia's slowdown has obviated the need for the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates in order to cool economic activity; a clear plus for the markets.

In the longer term, however, Asia's problems bode ill for investors. At some point, US companies' bottom lines will be hurt as cash-strapped Asian consumers stop buying US products.

Some economists have minimised Asia's impact on the economy. Mickey Levy and Peter Kretzmer at NationsBank point out that even a whopping 20 per cent decline in exports to Asia would reduce US gross domestic product by only 0.4 to 0.5 per cent. But that is still a sizeable chunk of the original estimates of 3 per cent growth.

While the extent of the Asian fallout is unclear, there is widespread agreement that first-quarter profits for US firms will be disappointing.

At the beginning of the year the consensus forecast on profits for Standard & Poor's 500 companies was an increase of about 8 per cent in 1998. But that looks too optimistic because first-quarter estimates have been pared back dramatically. Analysts in January were looking for 10 per cent first-quarter profit growth but they have now slashed that to 1 per cent. In its customary fashion the market brushed aside the bad news on first-quarter profits, but if these do prove disappointing, things could get ugly.

Even analysts who were ahead of the bull market think the current rally has reached the blow-off stage. Ed Yardeni, chief economist of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, believes that while the Dow may hit 10,000 this year, 1999 is likely to be a bear year because of millennium bug problems and deflationary forces from Asia.

The baby-boomers have been a driving force behind the bull market, investing through mutual funds with an eye on retirement and sending their children to university. The market's resilience in the face of negative news may be attributable to these investors, who bought on the market's falls.

However, they have yet to experience a truly precipitous market drop, one on the scale of the bearish early 1970s market, when the Dow plunged by 40 per cent between January 1973 and December 1974.

Investors have ridden on a rising escalator during the past 10 years, with only minor blips. When that ride comes to a jarring halt, new investors may panic and exacerbate the sell-off. But for irrepressible bulls like Mr Yardeni, a crash represents "one hell of a buying opportunity". He sees the Dow hitting 15,000 by 2005.

In Brief

THE pound reached a 10-year high, scoring 108.9 against a basket of currencies and climbing above 3.10 German marks. Treasury officials admitted that a consequent loss of export business could send the industrial sector into recession later this year.

BRITAIN could easily cancel the debts of the world's 20 poorest countries, according to new research by the Jubilee 2000 coalition. The total debt, $2.3 billion, represents less than the Government's subsidy to the Channel Tunnel rail link.

CANADA LIFE became the latest mutual life insurer to announce plans to convert to a public company. The move promises windfalls of about $3,600 for qualifying policyholders.

THE British public is becoming increasingly hostile to the euro, according to a Mori survey that showed a net proportion of voters opposed to a single European currency at 25 per cent in March, up from 19 per cent in January.

THE restructuring of Europe's defence industry suffered a blow when last-minute French demands forced a delay in awarding an order for "battlefield taxis" worth $5 billion.

MOST leading UK employers believe the Government's plan to create a legal right to trade union recognition will not damage industrial relations, according to a survey by NOP.

LADBROKE'S $600 million purchase of Coral betting shops was in doubt after the Government referred the deal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

CUNARD, owner of the Queen Elizabeth II and other leading cruise ships, was sold for $500 million to the world's largest company in the sector, the Miami-based Carnival Corporation.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates April 6	Sterling rates March 30
Australia	2.5138-2.5192	2.5286-2.5318
Austria	21.51-21.53	21.75-21.77
Belgium	63.08-63.20	63.79-63.89
Canada	2.3537-2.3559	2.3844-2.3863
Denmark	11.66-11.67	11.79-11.80
France	10.25-10.26	10.36-10.37
Germany	3.0586-3.0614	3.0927-3.0954
Hong Kong	12.86-12.87	12.99-12.99
Ireland	1.2132-1.2157	1.2301-1.2325
Italy	3,016-3,022	3,048-3,052
Japan	223.59-223.84	221.51-221.78
Netherlands	3.4447-3.4476	3.4861-3.4886
New Zealand	3.0112-3.0169	3.0233-3.0285
Norway	12.70-12.72	12.70-12.72
Portugal	313.21-313.56	316.73-317.05
Spain	259.47-259.69	262.45-262.70
Sweden	13.30-13.32	13.28-13.30
Switzerland	2.5373-2.5405	2.5443-2.5469
USA	1.6601-1.6611	1.6770-1.6776
ECU	1.5404-1.5423	1.5568-1.5576

FTSE100 Share Index up 189.9 at 6105.8. FTSE 250 Index up 30.1 at 5568.4. Gold up $3.50 at $310.60.

Eastern Africa Regional Office

IUCN The World Conservation Union

Mount Elgon (Kenya) Integrated Conservation and Development Project, Phase 1

IUCN - The World Conservation Union is providing technical support to the Government of Kenya in implementing the Mount Elgon Integrated Conservation and Development Project. The Project is to be implemented in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Forest Department in the Ministry of Natural Resources. It aims at contributing to the long-term conservation of the Mt. Elgon ecosystem by: providing support for improved management and sustainable use of its resources: building effective partnerships for conservation between multiple stakeholders; capacity building for local institutions and personnel; and promoting equitable sharing of benefits. IUCN also provides technical advice to a similar ongoing project implemented by the Uganda Wildlife Authority on the Ugandan side of Mt. Elgon.

The project seeks to recruit the following officers:

Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)

The CTA will be the principal focal point and co-ordinator for the delivery of IUCN's technical assistance in implementing the project. She/he will work closely with the Project Manager, and will be responsible for co-ordinating technical support and advice to the project staff in the implementation of the project, in accordance with the project document. In particular s/he will be responsible for co-ordinating the technical input for the formulation of a long-term integrated management plan for the Mt. Elgon ecosystem. S/he will liaise with project partners and other relevant bodies in the planning and overseeing of project activities at ecosystem district, and village levels in biodiversity conservation and management.

The candidate should have at least a second degree in a relevant field and a minimum of fifteen years professional experience in natural resource management some of which should be in Africa. Experience should, in particular, cover forest and protected area management, integration of ecosystem concerns into regional and district planning processes.

Experience in leading field based teams and working with communities is required. Knowledge of the English language is essential. Knowledge of Kiswahili would be an added advantage.

Rural Development Advisor (RDA)

The RDA will provide technical guidance regarding community participation in the conservation of the Mount Elgon ecosystem and other related community development activities. In particular, s/he will be responsible for providing advice and support to the District Project co-ordinators, and facilitate liaison between the project. District authorities and neighbouring communities. In the development and promotion of sustainable practices for management and utilisation of natural resources. The RDA will co-ordinate the implementation of socio-economic and other related studies, and advise on ways of increasing the participation of women in project activities. S/he will also coordinate the development of a comprehensive rural participation framework.

The candidate should have at least a second degree in a relevant discipline and professional experience of at least ten years, some of which should be in Africa. The experience should cover such areas as, community participatory processes in resource management, rural socio-economic surveys in developing countries, as well as gender related issues. Knowledge of the English language is essential. Knowledge of Kiswahili would be an added advantage.

Both posts will be based in Kitale in western Kenya, but staff will be expected to travel regularly for field work within the two Districts; Trans-Nzoia and Mt. Elgon. The posts are two-and-half-year positions with a possibility of extension. Project start-up is April 1998.

Prospective candidates should send letters of application, detailed curriculum vitae and names and contacts of three professional referees to: The Regional Representative, IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Office, P.O.Box 68200, Nairobi, Kenya or fax 254 2 890615 by May 2nd 1998. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

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Copperbelt (Zambia)	Vice Chancellor	[illegible]
Swaziland	P/AP/SL/L Geomorphology/Geology	[illegible]
UWI (Barbados)	P Legislative Drafting	[illegible]
UWI (Jamaica)	Chair in Zoology	[illegible]
UWI (Jamaica)	P Accounting	[illegible]
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UWI (Trinidad)	L/AL Child Health	[illegible]
NUST Zimbabwe	AP/SL/L Electronic Engineering	[illegible]
NUST Zimbabwe	AP/SL/L Applied Mathematics	[illegible]
AUSTRALIA		
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Tasmania	L Sociology	[illegible]
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Abbreviations: P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; ASP - Assistant Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer; L - Lecturer; AL - Assistant Lecturer; PDF - Postdoctoral Fellow; RA - Research Asso[illegible]

For further details of any of the above staff vacancies please contact ACU (Advertising), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, UK (Internat. tel. +44 171 387 8572 ext. 206 [UK office hours]; fax +44 171 383 0368; e-mail: appts@acu.ac.uk), quoting reference number of post(s). Details will be sent by airmail/first class post. A sample copy of the publication *Appointments in Commonwealth Universities*, including subscription details, is available from the same source.

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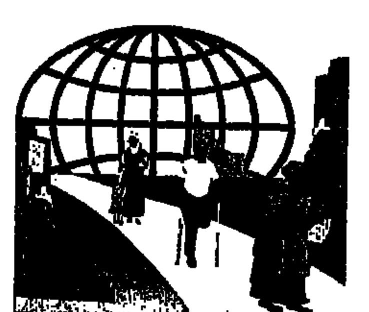
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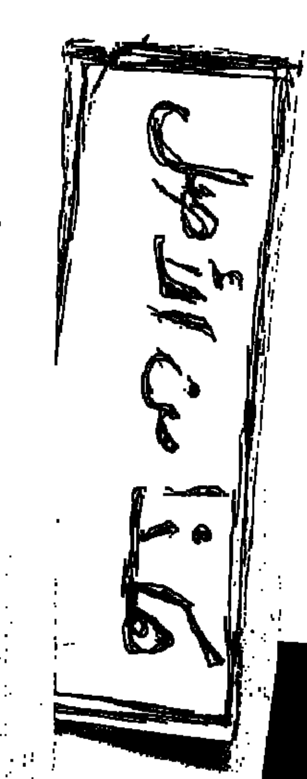
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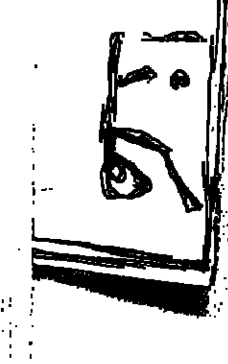
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Life clings precariously to the Antarctic ice, but it may be abundant in vast lakes below PHOTO: CHERRY ALEXANDER

A world untouched for 30 million years

Tim Radford

SCIENTISTS are poised to explore a mysterious lost world nearly four kilometres below Antarctica. A huge lake, insulated by millions of years of ice, could hold living creatures that inhabited the planet more than 30 million years ago.

British, French, German, Russian and United States scientists met in St Petersburg last month to agree on what will, in effect, be a landing on another planet: the painstaking venture into a body of water the size of Lake Ontario, more than 3,600m under the icecap at the Russian base of Vostok. The Russians have already penetrated to within 150 metres of the surface of the water. But then the drilling had to stop.

The researchers face a problem. They have to find a way to explore the mysterious world of Lake Vostok without contaminating it with life from the surface.

They know that there will be forms of life down there: Russian and US microbiologists have been examining microbes in samples of ice laid down 400,000 years ago.

"We've found some really bizarre things — things that we have never seen before," said Richard Hoover of Nasa. He and his Russian colleague have given the microscopic creatures temporary nicknames, such as Klingon, Mickey Mouse, Porpoise and Sphere. The discovery at such depths raises the hope that even stranger things lie waiting to be discovered under Vostok.

Cynan Ellis-Evans of the British Antarctic Survey, one of the experts at the St Petersburg meeting, said that the researchers were likely to use a hot-water lance to cut deeper into the ice. Then they plan to lower a thermal probe, which will sterilise itself as it descends. The ice will freeze again and close behind it.

"It's a one way trip, isolating itself from microbes in the upper ice," Dr Ellis-Evans said. "We are expecting to find new things . . . it is like going to another planet."

Nobody knows why lakes should exist under the largest body of ice on the planet. Antarctica was once a mild, forested landscape: even now, geologists are still discovering fossil ferns and carnivorous dinosaurs in the polar mountains.

The glaciers began to close over the continent 40 million years ago. Lake Vostok could be in a rift valley — a deep fissure in the continent's crust — and if it is, the huge depth of sediment below the water could be a "time capsule" of the planet's history.

Some geologists argue that there could be some form of volcanic heat deep in the rocks providing the energy for unusual forms of life. But there are other hypotheses: for instance, ice may have melted to form the lake as it sheared over the bedrock.

More than 99 per cent of Antarctica is covered in thick ice — but there could be hundreds of lakes below the icesheet.

"Every single one of them could be, potentially, of significance," said Dr Ellis-Evans. "This is a whole new world opening up for us."

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

IS THERE a finite number of people in line to the English throne? If so, who is last?

EGBERT, who died in 839AD, is generally reckoned to be the first King of England. Most English, Welsh, Scots, Irish, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders and North Americans, together with a substantial number of people from Europe and the Middle East, will be descended from him. Several people have made valiant efforts to list all known royal descendants, but without more than partial success.

Even if we could list them all, getting them into the correct batting order would present immense difficulties. The throne of England has often passed on on pragmatic rather than theoretical grounds. Devising a rule which validates everything that has actually happened is not that easy. For example, both Bloody Mary and Good Queen Bess were legally illegitimate at the time of their successions, yet the claims of others have been rejected on similar grounds.

Roman Catholics are barred by statute, so perhaps a symbolic answer to the supplementary question is the Pope. — *David Jackson, Coxhoe, Durham*

WHERE does the phrase "by a long chalk" come from?

IT REFERS to marking with chalk (before lead pencils were in common use) the points that a player or team has won in a game. A "long chalk" means a large number of points, so a great deal. A further reference is to the old custom in alehouses of writing up with chalk the amount of credit given. — *Basil Morgan, Uppingham, Norfolk*

HAS anyone ever seriously researched time travel?

MARGARET THATCHER had the British returning to the Victorian era. And General Curtis LeMay tried to bomb the Vietnamese back to the Stone Age. — *Ken Frank, Claremont, California, USA*

WHY is the lion referred to as "the king of the jungle" when it lives in open country?

JUNGLE is a Hindi word meaning "not an inhabited place". The word covers forest, wilderness, wold, waste, even the world (without human structures). The emphasis is on emptiness. Much of what is called jungle in India is steppe or nearly desert. — *Jim McManus, Wheaton Aston, Staffordshire*

Any answers?

WHAT became of the first man to put his head in a lion's mouth? Has this been tried with a tiger? — *Gerard Mackay, Nesscliffe, Shropshire*

WHAT is scruggin, as in scruggin cake? — *E Knott, Cheshire*

WHAT is the origin of the phrase "A shot in the arm"? — *Christine Zilius Mason, Scotts Valley, California, USA*

WHY is it called the missionary position? — *Martin Klopper, Taichung, Taiwan*

E-mail answers to weekly@guardian.co.uk; fax to (+44)171-242 0985, or post to the Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Rd, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at: http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Letter from Japan Mark Harris

Cinderella complex

MASAKO wants a white wedding. "Wearing a white wedding dress is romantic and pretty," she says. "You feel like a princess for a day with all your friends watching you."

Masako has a classic case of what is known as *Shinderera con* (Cinderella complex) — many young Japanese women dream of having a fairytale wedding at a chapel; preferably officiated by a Western priest.

And so I become priest for the day. When Masako asked me to conduct the ceremony I told her that I am not religious. "Neither is anyone else but you will look better on the photos than the American priest the Garden Chapel Soleil offered us," she reasoned.

And so I enter the cloth and deliver the nuptials. "Do you Kenichi Fujimoto take this woman Masako Kanazawa to be your lawful wedded wife?"

I look up at the groom through my age-fast spectacles, with my hands on the altar, holy as can be. High above, stained-glass windows set the fairytale scene as white doves fly over faraway castles and cascades fall into fertile valleys.

I wait nervously for Kenichi's confirmation in English. "I do."

I am told to emphasise the word "love" in my mock-sermon. "Love trusts. Love perseveres . . . Love Is All You Need."

In the land where the wrapping is as important as the gift, Japan's long history of adapting imported ideas means that borrowing the Christian ceremony for the purpose of gift-wrapping marriage is not a problem for most Japanese. Style glosses over religion to the point that Westerners with no credentials other than being Westerners can become fake priests. One such man from the United States earns $800 a day. He tells me: "Its good if you can get everyone to cry."

The hotel chapel where he works has imported an old church from England, complete with original stained glass, wooden beams and squeaking pews, and built it into the top of a high-rise wedding complex in downtown Osaka. The brochure invites you to "take a walk down the virgin road in a pure white dress".

Chapel weddings account for around 40 per cent of weddings in modern Japan. And as the planning of the wedding ceremony is the bride's domain, the choice of a chapel wedding can be seen to shift power just for a day, with the *hanayomesan* (flower bride) being the focus of attention.

Considered romantic and relaxed, chapel ceremonies provide an alternative to traditional Japanese Shinto weddings — family affairs with no smiles, no kisses and, according to most young Japanese women, "no style". In such a ceremony the bride is harnessed into a heavy kimono, topped with a wig weighing about 2kg, and on top of that a *tsunokakushi* — a white hat that is said to hide women's jealousy horns.

"I pronounce you husband and wife," I said. Feeling reverent, I instruct Kenichi to kiss Masako. All the watery eyes in the Garden Chapel Soleil gaze at the *hanayomesan*. Standing between huge displays of synthetic flowers and electric candles, the chorus sings "Memories" as the happy couple float down the "virgin road" for the confetti "flower-shower". Outside the chapel two inflatable love-doves are released into the sky over La Viena Wedding Complex Inc.

"Wedding factories" are popular because they efficiently herd families from the chapel and shrine, through the photo-studio, and on to the all-important reception — an ostentatious display of wealth originating from the traditional arranged marriages that consolidated business relations between families.

We travel this ceremonial conveyor-belt to the reception extravaganza. The lights drop and a synthesiser plays Abba's "Dancing Queen". A single spotlight falls on the happy couple as they head for the stage, which is flanked by a smoking plastic wedding cake.

By now defrocked, I mingle with a ménage of the traditional and the modern: picking at raw squid and roast beef, family guests in kimonos bearing ancestral crests sit with the "OLs" — the office ladies immaculate in velvet Versace suits and attachments of fake flowing hair.

The couple's bosses praise their employees' work-ethics and the screeching MC interviews the newly-weds about the happy day by radio-mike. "Flower bride, what dish can you cook best for the groom?" Still princess for the day, Masako smiles and says, "Instant noodles".

Everyone is delighted but the clock is about to strike midnight. Tearfully, Masako and Kenichi give flowers to their parents. The happy couple are going to honeymoon in Australia and must jump the Tokyo ship before it turns into a pumpkin.

A Country Diary

Meg Rooney

ALICE SPRINGS: The rocks of Ndhala Gorge tell many stories. As you walk along the river flat between sculptured red peaks, you can pick up chunks of sandstone that carry tales of the past.

There are the tracks of trilobites, which scuttled on the sandy bottom of a great inland sea here 500 million years ago. These spiny underwater beetles kicked up distinctive ridges of sand as they scavenged in shallow water near the shore.

Rock surfaces pock-marked by parallel tubes tell of marine worms that dug vertical burrows on an ancient beach. Ripple rock comes from waves washing back and forth on this beach. Patterns of mud cracks, filled with sand, tell of intertidal flats that swamped with water, then dried and cracked.

Another animal has also left its mark on the landscape. According to the Aborigines, caterpillars were one of the ancestral creatures that formed this gorge. Many of the large boulders are etched with their tracks, and there is evidence of the butterflies into which they grew. Where they entered the rock, the ancestral caterpillars left dots surrounded by circles. Single dots mark where they came out of the rock to continue their travels.

The hacker who turned himself in

David Sharrock in Jerusalem reports on the growing popularity of Israel's latest anti-hero

LAST month, some of the most secretive and sensitive establishments in the United States, including Nasa and the Pentagon, came under attack from an outside force. Entry was by that now familiar method, a computer linked to the Internet.

The lack of novelty was more than made up by the charge from the US undersecretary of defence, John Hammer, that the perpetrator was responsible for "the most systematic and organised attempt ever to penetrate the Pentagon's computer systems".

In terms of hysteria, the story got better by the minute. The computer hacker called himself "the Analyser" and was from the Middle East. Forty seven FBI agents, news agencies reported, were conducting an urgent worldwide search for the Analyser.

Too bad then that the quarry turned himself in, revealing his identity to an Internet magazine as a teenage Israeli boy looking forward to being called up for military service. That was last month. Since then *Ehud Tenenbaum* has achieved star status in his native country, even as Washington presses for a trial.

With Tenenbaum now under house arrest at home in the Tel Aviv commuter town of Hod Hasharon, and the Israeli parliament keen for him to address one of their committees, the questions are beginning to pile up. What drove Tenenbaum to break cover and is he as dangerous as the US would have us believe?

Why then does nobody in Israel, from the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, down, have a bad word for him?

Tenenbaum approached Wallal-News, an English-language Israeli Webzine, because two of his "pupils" in the US, with whom he corresponded by e-mail, had been arrested by the FBI in connection with hacking activities. Tenenbaum had planted a list of his own passwords within the Pentagon's computer system and passed them on to his pupils "Makaveli" and "Tooshort", residents of Cloverdale, in California.

According to Tenenbaum, hacking into major computer systems in the US was an intellectual challenge. "I never destroy a thing on a server, it's only the challenge of breaking in. I know I'm going to retire soon and I haven't taught anyone what I know

In Israel no one, from Netanyahu down, has a bad word for him

about hacking. Makaveli didn't stop nagging me, he had a true desire to learn . . . I felt it was a waste to let all my knowledge go.

"I gave him some hacking tools I've programmed and some access passwords to my servers. Mak probably didn't realise how serious this stuff can be. It's important that you realise that those two didn't break into any computer. They just tried to use my passwords list."

After the FBI raided the California homes of his Internet friends, Tenenbaum hacked the home page of an FBI officer to tell the bureau that he was the only person they should be looking for.

The Analyser met his Californian friends in a multinational group known as "the Enforcers", which hangs out in chat channels on the Web. The group's main activity is fighting racist and paedophile Web sites. The Enforcers have already threatened to cause "many problems" if their comrades are jailed. "None of us knows who the others are in real life," said Tenenbaum.

The group also found a way into the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. The Analyser followed his usual routine, searching for security holes and blocking them. This practice is to "mark territory", preventing other hackers from gaining access. The only alterations they made were to the Knesset's home page and President Ezer Weizman's home page — the latter "because we love him", according to the Analyser. If he feels differently about Netanyahu and his wife, Sarah, he is saying nothing, but the Israeli first couple's Web site has been tampered with in recent weeks so that Net visitors are transferred to sites of pornographic images.

The Analyser said he was retiring "because I've had enough. I've had offers from abroad to 'cross the border' and be head of security in some servers. I would cross the border and work with the FBI, but I don't trust them. They'll sue me if they can."

The interview at a suburban McDonalds ended there, but Tenenbaum's relationship with the FBI was just beginning. Within days of the interview appearing, 10 FBI investigators and officials were in Israel to "assist" police in their criminal inquiry. Two other Israelis, both aged 18, have also had their passports confiscated and continue to be questioned.

"This arrest should send a message to would-be computer hackers all over the world that the United States will treat computer intrusions as serious crimes," said the US attorney general, Janet Reno. "We will work around the world and in the depths of cyberspace to investigate and prosecute those who attack computer networks."



Tenenbaum claims the attacks were an intellectual challenge

If there is a whiff of witchhunt swirling around Washington, then in Israel Tenenbaum's popularity seems to rise by the day. Netanyahu's first comment on the affair was that the Analyser was "damn good", before quickly adding that he could be "very dangerous too".

Tenenbaum has acquired a media-friendly lawyer, Amnon Zichroni, who is fighting a very public campaign to keep sympathy flowing. "It appears to me he brought benefit to the Pentagon. In essence he came and discovered the Pentagon's coding weaknesses," says Zichroni, adding sardonically that the US authorities should maybe pay Tenenbaum for his services.

Tenenbaum is due to appear before the Knesset's committee for science and technology research and development. Its chairwoman, Dalia Itzik, has said that she thinks there is no criminal case to answer.

"From all the reports I'm hearing, this is a young man who did what he did not from criminal intent, but for a challenge. He didn't cause damage, but rather exposed flaws in terms of the protection of important computer information . . . his huge amount of knowledge should be used to help the state, but this in accord with accepted rules and standards."

But in an abrupt change of attitude, Tenenbaum stopped co-operating with detectives late last month, apparently after learning that several US computer companies are considering filing civil suits against him.

Internet service provider Net Decks claims that it has spent hundreds of hours in repair work, while officials at Western Michigan university have had to change 5,000 passwords. Net Decks's director, Bill Zayan, was furious at Netanyahu's reaction to Tenenbaum's activities. "This isn't a game or a joke but rather a phenomenon which causes real damage. In my view the Analyser is a vandal, not a hero."

Zichroni may have the best explanation for a battle that owners of vast and important networks seem destined to lose. "In the past we used to boast about the girls we had. Nowadays kids boast about their ability to hack into computer systems."

Log on for a bumpy ride

Owen Bowcott

WHILE Captain John Hackett last week shrugged off a hero's welcome for saving a plane laden with Leeds United footballers, following a fire in the turbine seconds after take off at London's Stansted airport, colleagues were busy analysing his split-second decision making. Three times within recent months, British pilots have been praised for seizing the initiative and transforming potential air borne disasters into controlled crash landings.

Last August a British Region Airways flight from Manchester came down safely after its undercarriage jammed. Last November a Virgin airliner with similar problems skidded to a halt at Heathrow. The doom-laden phrase "pilot error" has been mercifully absent from the headlines.

While the airline industry, politicians and union officials fret over the dangers from increased traffic, one public website on the Internet provides an uncensored — and sometimes disconcerting — insight into life on today's instrument-burdened flight decks.

PPRuNe, otherwise known as the Professional Pilots' Rumour Network, may read like laddish cockpit-to-cockpit banter, with occasional references to which companies employ the sexiest female crew. But last week the online talk was all about the close call at Stansted airport. Resentment of uninformed press coverage is rife among pilot contributors. Some journalists' only qualification for writing stories, one comment suggested, was a "liking for Airfix kits".

Other pilots were pondering whether they would have taken the same action in the circumstances. "There's no computer that can make these types of decisions for us," one correspondent admitted. "It comes down to skill and experience."

Scanning the site's pages, exchanges more often consist of pressing, personal issues — such as finding out which airline pays the highest wages. "Virgin is a wonderful airline to fly for," one anonymous pilot enthuses.

"Average work pattern (747) is four trips a month. As these flights are three to four days, we have a lot of time off . . . Icing on the cake is a superb garden party at Richard Branson's house every year . . . Everyone is friendly and almost all the girls are blonde!" Job-hopping among "Nigels", as pilots call themselves, is also a recurrent theme.

But it is the plaintive queries about air safety lodged on the PPRuNe website that jar most on the lay reader's desire for self-preservation en route to holidays or business meetings.

"Even those [African] countries that have reasonable Air Traffic Control are joining the slippery slope downhill," one pilot comments. "There was nearly a mid-air collision in Botswana. A north bound plane was cleared to climb through the level of a south bound plane. The [authorities] are keeping quiet on this, however the controller was immediately suspended. The collision was only averted by a TCAS [Traffic Collision Avoidance System] warning in one aircraft."

Another correspondent worries about a recent near miss near Biggin Hill, in Kent; "It strikes me both sets of aircrew should have been aware of who was above and below in the [holding] stack and perhaps queried the ATC instructions when the higher aircraft was cleared to descend."

Nearly all contributors are unnamed. A reminder on its website declares: "This is an anonymous forum. The origins of the contributions may be opposite to what may be apparent."

Those who use PPRuNe are obviously not alone in worrying about future air safety. Projections show air traffic in Britain growing by 5 per cent a year. One serious accident a week in the world is "a very real possibility" in the future, Stuart Matthews, president of the Washington-based Flight Safety Foundation, an independent watchdog, claimed last month.

The greatest risks are in the "undeveloped world", particularly South America, Africa and large parts of Asia, he believes. Over the past 10 years, 70 per cent of all accidents have involved carriers who have accounted for only 16 per cent of the total air traffic.

"The majority of these were from underdeveloped or Third World countries. We need to provide assistance to these areas. If we do not, the problems will become greater," Matthews said.

PPRuNe's role in providing a public forum for this safety debate is grudgingly accepted by professional bodies. The anonymity, it is accepted, allows staff to flag up warnings without fear of retribution from their employers.

The pilots' union, Balpa, insists it has "nothing to do" with PPRuNe. "Some of the pilots I have spoken to," a spokesman adds, "think the puerile stuff spoils it." But Joe Magee, of the Institute of Professional and Managerial Staff, which represents most of the UK's 2,500 air traffic controllers, says the website "shows the concern about the level of safety out there".

Equally worrying, Magee maintains, is pressure on "overworked" air traffic staff not to file "overload reports" when they believe they are handling too many aircraft in their sector. "Some of these reports are being derailed and stopped. People are being told that they were not overloaded, they just couldn't handle the situation — so don't file."

Some pilots are aware that the website offers a highly coloured view of air safety and life in the cockpit. "We read so much of the downside of our profession in PPRuNe," one pilot notes. "It would be less damning to our profession for [non-aviation] visitors to these pages to read that there are still some of us who enjoy our flying and do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay."

PPRuNe is on:
http://www.avnet.co.uk/pprune/index.html

Gentle warrior

Nino Konis Santana

WHEN I first met Nino Konis Santana, the commander of the East Timorese guerrilla movement Falintil, who has died aged 39, he told me of his worst moment. It was 1990 and he was in an eight-strong unit ambushed by the Indonesian army. Six of his unit were killed outright. He was shot in the neck, thigh and foot, and a fellow rebel was shot six times in the back. They crawled to safety in some bushes; he was naked but had a gun. The two men hid for a week, living on grass. Eventually, villagers discovered them, and nursed them back to health. His comrade was to die in a later battle.

Our meeting took place in 1994 in the East Timorese mountains. We talked solidly for 48 hours, first in a safe house and later in a forest clearing after a pre-dawn mountain march. Santana, charming and mercurial with bushy hair and a mandarin beard, had reluctantly taken over as commander of Falintil a year earlier. He was the fifth holder of the post since the Indonesian invasion of the former Portuguese colony in 1975.

The first East Timorese leader, Nicolau Lobato, died in 1979. His three successors were all captured by the Indonesians and, at the time



Resist or die . . . Santana (circled) with guerrillas in East Timor

of Santana's succession, there was talk of the leadership passing outside the territory.

A member of the Fatu-luko tribe, Santana was born near eastern Lautem in Lospalos. He received a Catholic education and qualified as a teacher's aide. In 1974, at the age of 16, he got involved in politics, and after the Indonesian occupation the following year he joined the guerrillas in the mountains, where he was to remain.

As for his death, the direct cause, his colleagues said, was a fall from an escarpment in heavy mist while returning from a patrol. But he had long suffered from untreated war wounds. He was said to be moving with difficulty because of gangrene from a bullet lodged in his thigh since 1990.

My most cherished memory of him is of our breakfast in the forest. When the sun finally rose, villagers appeared as if from nowhere, bringing flasks of steaming coffee and freshly baked rolls. Another, uninvited, villager — somehow evading the look-outs — gaped with amazement to see a white woman picnicking with a heavily armed guerrilla group.

Santana sat down next to him and held his hand. He explained gently that they were of the resistance and that he must never speak of what he had seen. The interloper nodded solemnly and went on his way.

Jill Jolliffe

Nino Konis Santana, liberation fighter, born 1959; died March 11, 1998

Paradoxes of a democrat

E M Sankara Namboodiripad

THE ELECTION of E M Sankara Namboodiripad, who has died aged 88, as chief minister of Kerala in 1957 created a sensation. For his elevation made him head of the world's first democratically elected communist government.

The reality was a government following mainstream socialist policies, yet within two years India's president had dismissed it, arguing that "law and order" had broken down. The tactical error of E M S — as he was known — had been to take on two vested interests with his land and educational reform bills.

E M S was born into a Brahmin family in northern Kerala, then part of the Madras Presidency. The state was castigated at the time by Vivekananda, a saintly Hindu reformer, as a madhouse of caste. Travel by train "polluted" the higher castes, and as late as 1936 the lower castes threatened to convert *en masse* to Christianity if they were not allowed to walk past the temples. There was not merely untouchability but unseeability, with prescribed distances as to how near you could approach a Brahmin. E M S rejected this privileged existence, living humbly throughout his life — indeed he gave his share of the family estate to the Communist party.

He was the movement's most articulate thinker. During the Communist Party of India's 1963-4 crisis between pro-China leftists and Moscow-leaning rightists, he was a centrist, and when a split became inevitable he aligned himself with the left but was denounced by China because he steered the breakaway Communist Party of India (Marxist) from the excesses of Maoism and of the China-backed ultra-left Naxalites.

He was Kerala's chief minister again in 1967-69 within a left progressive coalition. It did not work. Mired in the corruption of minor parties, conflict with the central government and quarrels between the rump CPI and the stronger CPI(M), the government passed, unmourned.

E M S was a paradox. Personally a democrat, he backed Stalin's actions in eastern Europe, and disapproved of Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts to reform the Soviet Union and of China's economic liberalisation.

Both admirers and critics believe that had he understood the reasons for China's economic reform, the pace of economic development in his home state of Kerala would have been quicker. In old age his mind became inflexible. None the less, E M S is one of the outstanding figures of 20th century Kerala.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and two daughters.

Tom Nossiter

E M Sankara Namboodiripad, politician, born June 14, 1909; died March 19, 1998



Computers have learnt to jam just like Charlie Parker. Well, almost. **Steven Poole** reports

Bird by mouse

CAN A computer swing? Sure it can, if you hang it up by a rope and kick it hard enough. No, man, what I'm saying is: can a digital cat play jazz? Jazz, the apotheosis of cool, the fiery crucible of 20th century musical authenticity, the spontaneous outpouring of one man or woman's artistic self-expression through the irreducibly physical medium of a sax, a trumpet, a piano, a double bass? That's one citadel of humanity, surely, that could never be stormed by the creeping hordes of artificial intelligence.

Never? Better think twice. Last month on BBC television jazz saxophonist Courtney Pine was jamming along on his soprano to the sounds of a computerised jazz quartet. Nothing unusual there: computers have been able to provide adequate, if stiff-backed, accompaniment to practising soloists for years. But then Pine stopped blowing — and another, invisible saxophone continued to play with impressive fluidity and melodic interest across the harmonies, sounding weirdly like the late giant of the alto, Charlie Parker. Extraordinarily, this was the work of a computer program, Improvisor, and — crucially — the ghostly sax was not just playing a predetermined line, but making it up as it went along in real time, just like a real jazz musician does.

The necromancer responsible for summoning up this digital revenant is jazz musician Paul Hodgson, who is also a skilled computer programmer. His interest in the subject began in the eighties, when he was working as a music teacher, trying to teach children how to play jazz. He knocked up a program that, while playing the chords of a song, would analyse the harmony to work out and play a mode for the current stage of the tune (a "mode" is a kind of altered scale). His students could then listen and pick up the appropriate modes as they went along, to give them some basic building blocks for soloing.

In the meantime Hodgson began to wonder whether he could get the computer itself to generate an interesting solo. And that is where Charlie Parker comes in. "I started analysing lots of Parker solos," Hodgson remembers, "trying to look for patterns and repetitive structures that he was using, and seeing if I could work out a way in which these solos could actually be put together. I abstracted out sets of variable-length patterns from different solos, and then I started working on ways of applying these patterns to different tunes, to create new solos. And that's basically what you heard."



Paul Hodgson jams with his creation, Improvisor PHOTO: EAMONN McCABE

Parker . . . out soon on CD-Rom

In jazz the term "pattern" can denote a group of notes that a musician learns to play at speed in numerous keys until it can be instantly recalled during a solo — the notes fall naturally under the fingers, leaving the brain free to figure out what to play next. Some musicians don't do any more than this. An unimpressed (or envious) jazzer might damn a colleague with the gravelly expletive "patterner".

In this way the method of the program Improvisor is close to the way a mediocre musician operates. But does the fact that Parker's style can be imitated by a computer mean that the great Bird was a mere patterner?

Of course not. "It doesn't actually tell you how the patterns were created in the first place," Hodgson observes. "Parker might use similar patterns, but he modifies and sculpts them to the context of the music that he's playing."

That said, Hodgson has found to his surprise that the computer comes up with phrases that he has never heard Bird use. "It's actually creating new stuff — and some of it is bloody good. This raises the question of whether Bird's style could evolve further in cyberspace."

Hodgson has concluded that one aspect of creativity is the way an artist chooses patterns and puts them together. "It applies to painting as well. 'You've only got to look at 20th century art and abstract painting to see that there are lots of common patterns that artists are using."

However, the reason top players are popular is not just the notes they play, but the distinct characteristics of the sound they make. If you add to Hodgson's melodic calculations something to account for this idiosyncratic control of timbre in real time, the computation becomes forbiddingly complex. And, of course, any real jazz musician is always listening to what everyone else in the band is doing — which Improvisor doesn't do. There'll be no silicon stars of free jazz for a good while — if ever.

Courtney Pine's own verdict on the computer program was interestingly mixed. On the first take, which the BBC didn't show because of the pungent language, Pine said it was "bloody brilliant". But as for replacing humans — well, no cigar yet. "You can't replace the human experience, the human feel," Pine smiled. "What's missing, I suppose, is some of the soul, some of the spirit."

HODGSON'S own researches have brought him to the conclusion that the idea of a top-flight artificial musician is an oxymoron: "To create music you have to be alive in the world. It's not possible." What he is now looking at instead are ways to use his system to create new musical interfaces — for disabled children, and for artists working in other media. Computerised image-tracking could provide an instantaneous soundtrack for a ballet, or future disco queens could alter a record's sound with flailing limbs.

In a way his work has pleasingly come full circle: from trying to replicate human creativity electronically, to producing an electronic tool that can be used to enhance human creativity. This will be a relief to people who prefer to snap their fingers at a real, groovy-shirted person on stage, rather than nod their heads at an offensively beige lump of extruded plastic.

And Hodgson sounds a note of warning: "Maybe there's an in-principle limit to what we can do. It's our quest to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and be completely knowledgeable about everything in the world — and in so doing, what we could easily do is destroy it, by building things that don't have any spiritual consciousness and become out of our control." With that unpalatable scenario ringing in our ears, perhaps it's best to go back to the old records again. After all, a computer might study ornithology, but it'll never know how it feels to fly.

Radio active

CD REVIEWS
Tim Ashley

NAXOS deserve an award. Using archive material supplied by the Canadian-based Immortal Performances of Recorded Music Society, they've secured the commercial release of operatic radio broadcasts, taken from live performances from 1937-1943, some of them hitherto only available as expensive bootlegs.

Not everyone will like them: recording techniques weren't ideal then, although the sound is always acceptable and in some instances astonishingly good. Critical editions weren't in vogue in those days either, so if you blanch at the idea of cuts, think twice. If you've any sense, however, you'll buy at least four and preferably six of the seven, because — with one exception — they contain some of the greatest performances in music history.

The exception is Strauss's Night In Venice, from Berlin in 1938. Marcel Wittrisch is an elegant Caramello and Carla Spletter is aristocratic as Annina, but the conducting is stodgy and the dialogue goes on forever. You can either cope with Third Reich recordings or you can't. Here, the quality of the performance doesn't justify its release.

The rest, however, are very different. They derive from the famous Saturday matinée Met broadcasts at a time when the company — made up of America's best singers and exiled legends who had fled from Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin — was at its peak. Operatic tradition, under attack in Europe, was fiercely defended on the other side of the Atlantic. The artists' commitment is breathtaking and you get an electric excitement that no studio recording could generate. This is what music, and opera in particular, is all about.

The urgency of contemporary political events clearly turned a potentially good performance of La Fille Du Regiment, in the winter of 1940, into a great one. France had fallen, and when Lily Pons, as the regimental mascot Marie, launches into her barnstorming final aria, the audience goes berserk. The much criticised Pons was a wonderful comedienne, and coloratura has rarely been as stunning as it is here.

Salvatore Baccaloni is a hilarious dirty old man as Sergeant Sulpice. Raoul Jobin is a touching Tonio, while Ira Pettine's Marquise de Birkenfeld sounds like Lady Bracknell on speed.

The Tales Of Hofmann is notable for Lawrence Tibbett, the century's greatest baritone, definitive as the four manifestations of Hofmann's demonic alter-ego. René Maison, as Hofmann, gets the character's unnerving ambiguity absolutely right. Vina Bovy sharply differentiates the four female stereotypes — automaton, whore, victimised waif and camp diva — that haunt his imagination. There's wonderful conducting too, from Maurice Abravanel.

Bruno Walter's 1942 Don Giovanni, the stuff of legend, has never been bettered. Walter catches every emotional flicker and moral nuance of Mozart's multi-faceted score. The Met's two great rival basses, Ezio Pinza and Alexander Kipnis, make the best Giovanni and Leporello imaginable. Rose Bampton's blazing Anna is a woman on the edge of a nervous breakdown. Jarmila Novotna's Elvira is fiery and vulnerable. An unmissable reissue.

Erich Leinsdor's reputation as a variable Wagnerian derives from his rather stolid studio recordings. Live, it was a different story: his Tristan is wonderfully paced. Lauritz Melchior is the best tenor you will ever hear in Wagner. Helen Traubel, the Met's rival to the legendary Kirsten Flagstad's Isolde, is all rage and passion, funking one top C, otherwise steady as a rock.

The Faust and Alceste, though not in the same league, are worth having. Gluck's masterpiece finds Bampton paired with Maison. Although she apparently took over the performance at short notice, she's wonderfully vivid. Maison is in beautiful voice and Ettore Panizza conducts perfectly.

Gounod's war-horse is a two-man show with Pinza fabulous as Mephistopheles, and the young Leonard Warren an excellent Valentin. Pelleter drives it too hard though, and Richard Crooks's Faust is passionless. Helen Jepson is weak as Marguerite, though the audience goes wild for her. The excitement that she was capable of generating live didn't, it seems, transfer to disc.

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Holding a mirror up to desolation

THEATRE
Michael Billington

I HAVE measured out my life in Uncle Vanyas: indeed two particular productions, by Laurence Olivier and Peter Stein, will haunt me to my grave. But even if Katie Mitchell's RSC/Young Vic co-production is not quite on the same exalted plane, it is still a treasurable occasion likely to penetrate the memory for days afterwards.

David Lan, in the published Introduction to his new version, makes a subtle point that whereas The Seagull belongs to the 19th century theatre, in Uncle Vanya Chekhov was writing the first modern play. That strikes me as profoundly true, in that atmosphere prevails over incident. By the end all that has really happened is that Vanya and his niece, Sonya, have come face to face with the waste and desolation of their infinitely sad lives.

In Uncle Vanya, Chekhov discards melodrama; yet how beautifully he orchestrates the quotidian realities of life. And the great thing about Mitchell's production is that it combines minute attention to detail with rigorous sense of form. She also has the confidence never to raise her voice: she allows us to eavesdrop, as it were on intimate conversations to often devastating effect. Only in the moment where Vanya tries to shoot the Professor does the production miss Chekhov's tragi-comic momentum.

This is a rich, detailed production blessed by some excellent performances. Stephen Dillane's Vanya is an angry obsessive who sees everywhere a mockery of his own wasted potential. Anastasia Hille's Yelena likewise seems torn apart by her awareness of her own futility. Like all the best Sonyas, Jo McInnes makes you feel that Astrov, in rejecting her, is ruining his own chance of happiness and Linus Roache makes Astrov himself a quietly sensitive man alert to the destructiveness of idleness. But perhaps the real quality of the production lies in the fact that you emerge feeling you have seen less a piece of drama than a mirror held up, with heartrending accuracy, to nature itself.

Like all Irish writers, Brian Friel is obsessed by exile and homecoming. But his latest, very Chekhovian, play, Give Me Your Answer Do at London's Hampstead theatre is specifically about the writer's sense of exile from self; and it goes on to suggest, with haunting poignancy, that most of us stagger through life adopting masks to disguise our inner uncertainty.

That makes the play sound abstract. In fact it is rivetingly specific. The setting is Ballybeg in County Donegal. And the dilemma facing the hero — a blocked, hard-up novelist called Tom Connolly — is direct: should he sell his manuscripts to a rich Texan university, assuming they make a handsome offer, or should he persist in his life of obstinate, draining penury?

But that is only the peg for an exploration of the insecurity felt most acutely by the writer but common to all humanity. As played with absolute conviction by Niall Buggy, Connolly is an awkward, shambling figure ill at ease in company and only truly himself when weaving fantasies to amuse his mute, institutionalised daughter. But as his wife says of writers: "You're unhappy in the world you inhabit and you're more unhappy in the fictional world you create; so you drift through life like exiles from both places."

This is much more, however, than an incestuous play about the plight of the writer: with non-judgmental compassion, Friel implies that we most of us lead lives of quiet desperation. For all this, the play is very funny. The sight of two writers, joined at the hip by fraternal insecurity and a sense of mutual envy, has a hilarious accuracy: even the casual cruelties people inflict on one arouse bilious laughter. But in the end the play moves one by Friel's insistence that we all play roles to camouflage our uncertainty; the only difference with writers is that they are more likely to reveal the face behind the mask.

Robin Lefevre's production is beautifully alert to the play's tragi-comic mood. Friel is back on top form, writing about life's disappointments with a wrenching honesty and understanding.

A taste of honey

CINEMA
Richard Williams

IN ULYSSES JACKSON, a taciturn grandfather who keeps bees in the swamps of the Florida panhandle, the writer and director Victor Nunez has created one of the richest movie roles of the decade. And in Peter Fonda he has found the ideal actor. Ulee's Gold is a film of many admirable parts, but in the end it is about one role and one performance.

The art that Fonda brings to Ulee's Gold is something only cinema can reveal. How crazy, then, that this year's Academy Award should have gone instead to Jack Nicholson, his old colleague. What Nicholson does in As Good As It Gets is the kind of acting, all gesture and grimace, that you can see any night in the theatre. Fonda, by contrast, deploys the screen actor's skill of creating the illusion of intimacy through restraint.

Cinema also offers the potential for a productive interaction between the fictional character and the actor's public identity. In Fonda's case the impact of his performance in Ulee's Gold is reinforced by the anonymity of his recent career. As we watch the film, we find ourselves wondering about him, about where he's been and what he's done. And, in one very specific way, our speculation nourishes our understanding of Ulee Jackson.

A Vietnam veteran, Ulee scrapes a living by harvesting honey from bees fed on the pollen of tupelo gum trees, a skill handed down through three generations. "The bees and I have an understanding," he tells a new neighbour, Connie (Patricia Richardson). "I take care of them, and they take care of me."

No one else does. A failed bank robbery has put his son, Jimmy, in jail. Jimmy's wife, Helen, is running wild in another town. In their absence, Ulee is looking after his two school-age granddaughters, Casey and Penny.



All stillness and suppressed anguish . . . Peter Fonda in Victor Nunez's Ulee's Gold

As he deflects Connie's offers of assistance, we realise that this is a man so committed to self-sufficiency that he has hermeticised himself. But a telephone call summoning him to rescue Helen and a trap set by Jimmy's former accomplices propel him into a new relationship with the world.

Nunez sketches in the Vietnam background with a light touch, but we are left in no doubt that the war shaped Ulee's adult life, fracturing its sense of continuity. And here is where the echoes of Fonda's personal history resonate inside the role. We associate him with the anti-establishment mood of the late sixties, and so an ironic counterpoint plays in our minds alongside the film's narrative.

All stillness and suppressed anguish, Fonda turns Ulysses Jackson into a role that Clint Eastwood might have killed to play, and there are outstanding subsidiary performances from Christine Dunford as Helen, Jessica Biel (Casey) and Vanessa Zima (Penny). The scenes following Helen's return, when the girls look on as Ulee and Connie subject their mother to an informal detoxification, are authentically harrowing.

Its spare, piercingly accurate dialogue makes Ulee's Gold feel like the screenplay Raymond Carver might have written. "Now me, I'm divorced," Connie tells Ulee. "Twice, actually. No kids, fortunately." A pause. "I guess fortunately." Only the ending, although dramatically justified, comes as a mild disappointment.

The trouble with bringing a book like **Oscar and Lucinda** to the screen is the unlikelihood of avoiding offence to the very people responsible for its success. Those readers whose imaginations were fired by Peter Carey's magical story of the strange liaison between a damaged young English parson and a spirited young Australian factory owner in the late 19th century will inevitably be the first to take offence at the tampering with their dreams.

In terms of sensitivity and fidelity, the 1988 Booker Prize-winner could hardly ask for a more devoted servant than Gillian Armstrong, a long-term friend of the author. Armstrong and her scriptwriter, Laura Jones, have probably done everything they could to preserve the particular mood of this complicated, daring and literary novel.

With straw-like hair and a petrified smile, Ralph Fiennes certainly satisfies Carey's description of the vulnerable, aquaphobic Oscar Hopkins: "He was light, airy, made from the quills of a bird . . . The eyes were so clean and unprotected, like freshly peeled fruit."

Cate Blanchett, lean and swift, the unorthodoxy of her upbringing reflected in a series of frock-and-trouser combinations, makes a similarly decent fist of Lucinda, and both she and Fiennes work hard to create a convincing relationship between the two, which begins with card sessions on board ship from England to Australia and is sustained when they reach her homeland, only to be ruptured by a tragic misapprehension.

While there is no way of translating Carey's incantatory rhythms to a screenplay, his climactic sequence might have been made for celluloid, and the result is undeniably spectacular. Armstrong sets a glass church afloat on the Bellinger river, Lucinda's gift to the exiled Rev Dennis Hasset (Ciaran Hands). The vision of this beautiful structure gliding between the river's wooded banks will strike even those who find the pace of the film pedestrian and its tone too whimsical.

Prozac for the human soul

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

OKTOBER (ITV) is one of those paranoid thrillers where the hero does a lot of running because Absolutely Everyone Is Out To Get Him. Jim Harper (Stephen Tompkinson), who is besotted by Rochelle, a pharmaceutical heiress, gatecrashes a top-secret conference on a Swiss mountain-top to see her.

You do feel that this is the action of a much sillier man than Tompkinson. Which may be why he is sporting a mop of unaccustomed curls, giving him a tousled air.

Rochelle, who is as warm and womanly as the north face of the Eiger, is enthusing her troops with news of the company's new wonder drug. "It'll bring in $3,000,000,000 per year. It is a gift from God. No mind-altering drug has ever gone as deep as this one. Its potential is limitless. Prozac for the human soul." The only problem was that it put you in a coma.

(Rochelle and her huge Swiss drug company are, of course, no relation to Roche, the huge Swiss drug company. Though in her place I'd be changing my name to Doris by deed poll before a jumbo jet full of lawyers landed.)

The drug's most striking quality is that it taps the subconscious. Those who take it find they are are in telepathic contact. They sense each other's pain and communicate in dreams, like wolves howling across the wilderness. There is a good deal of talk about the collective unconscious but it will only give you a headache. (Try an aspirin.)

Jim is killed in the first reel, which would make this a very brief thriller indeed if Rochelle hadn't revived him ("I'll go in through the nipple") with a shot of wonder drug.

He is now a lab animal and, as such, his value is flatteringly enhanced. "$50,000,000 on legs!" So he legs it.

When Jim's doctor offers him the use of his seaside home, he doesn't think that odd. I am on perfectly affable terms with my doctor. Not once has the bastard offered me the use of his seaside home. Jim also trusts Rochelle, Linda and a gaggle of young people he meets in a pub, who offer the warmest camaraderie on the briefest acquaintance. Every last one is in on it.

It's a good-looking thriller that nips along nicely. But will whoever it is that keeps saying "Oh, don't be so silly!" please shut up? Oh, it's me.

The meandering and charming *Lion Country* (BBC1) is half way home. Lord Bath, however, is not. He is in St Tropez with his multi-coloured kaftan. He is vivid proof how much duller life would be without the happy happenstance of the hereditary system. As was once said approvingly about the Order of the Bath, "There's no damn merit about it. You never know what's going to pop up next out of the bath." In this case it's a rather endearing old duck.

Keeping it in the family

Sue Arnold

Strangers: A Family Romance
by Emma Tennant
Jonathan Cape 183pp £12.99

DROP a name and watch me race to catch it. I'm a sucker for famous names, with one proviso — they have to be dead for only then can they be truly romantic. I'm also a sucker for romance. Given these proclivities how could I fail to relish Strangers: A Family Romance by Emma Tennant, a part fictional, part biographical account of her rich, privileged, titled, profligate and pretty much hopeless family?

The Tennants were never Premier League toffs — nowhere near as grand as the Devonshires (Emma's grandfather was the first Baron Glenconner), as clever as the Howards or as eccentric as the Redes. Tragic is the usual tabloid description of the family when yet another member gets disinherited, dies of Aids or falls out with Princess Margaret. I'd just call them sad.

So why their fascination? We're back to those famous names. The Tennants collected them; if they had a single talent, it was for surrounding themselves with, better still marrying, famous people. Emma's great aunt Margot married H H Asquith and served quails' eggs, consommé and crown roast to Winston Churchill and Rupert Brooke at No 10.

Her married aunt Clare had an affair with Lionel Tennyson, grandson of the poet, who went on to captain the English cricket team. When the prime minister wrote him an admonishing letter, the young bounder replied: "Dear Mr Asquith, you are an interfering old buger [sic]." Shades of Bonnie Prince Charlie's rabets. Why are upper-class chaps such illiterate twits?

Lord Alfred Douglas was grandmother Pamela's first cousin. Emma's half-brother Colin invited Princess Margaret to stay at the family home, Glen, the freezing mock-Gothic castle at Traquair in the Scottish Borders where the homemade electricity failed every night and the grounds were full of Daily Express reporters hoping for a royal engagement scoop. Nothing changes.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, pre-first world war to 1941, is seen through the eyes of Louisa, the family's 17-year-old housemaid in love all her life with Bim, the Glenconner heir killed on the Somme. Bim was probably the nicest of all the Tennants. At 17 he would quote from the Iliad "with modesty and finesse". The second part is told by the author herself.

One of Emma Tennant's skills as a novelist is her visual acuity. Louisa's section is full of details of shooting parties and picnics, and bristles with gossip — Asquith was apparently infatuated with Venetia Stanley, one of his daughter's friends, and wrote intimate notes to her every day — but it reads disconcertingly like a gazetteer. If Hello! had been around in 1912 it would have read like this. Everyone is wealthy, clever, well-connected and glamorous. Well, maybe not Margot Asquith who looks like Mr Punch. But somehow they're not real. They have no hearts. Only when Emma takes over do they come to life.

Twelve-year-old Emma discovers a secret cupboard in the Walnut Room at Glen, opens it and out pours "an avalanche of the frozen tears of my grandmother and her world". Up till then, the portraits of women with grumpy Queen Victoria faces and men like stiff cut-outs had been strangers.

"I learnt that the sole cause of their unhappiness, which in my family was to assume the proportions of Greek tragedy, could be discovered again and again in the loss and thwarting of love, patterns and repetitions as densely interwoven as the birds and leaves of Pamela's grandmother's William Morris designs."

Exactly whose love was thwarted when Colin Tennant failed to propose to Princess Margaret isn't clear. A generation earlier, according to one of the Glen house guests, Colin's father Christopher was invited to Glamis and funked proposing to Elizabeth Bowes-Lyons. He fled to Venice instead and had an affair with John Barrymore's wife.

Strangers is full of these fascinating snippets, but like an Oriental banquet stuffed with tasty morsels it leaves you hungry for more. What, for instance, came of Harry Cust, her grandmother's only real love, he of the beautiful fingernails? What exactly was the relationship between Asquith and Venetia Stanley and, most tantalising of all, what was the burning secret Emma's own nephew whispered in her ear before he died of Aids? If Tennant had chosen to write Strangers as pure fiction, it might have been up there with The Pursuit Of Love. As it stands, it leaves you vaguely dissatisfied, which may of course be precisely what she planned. The queen of sequels has shown us the goose — the golden eggs, lots of them, are probably on their way.

There's a boy in my soup

Ian Sansom

About a Boy
by Nick Hornby
Gollancz 286pp £15.99

THERE are basically two kinds of soup. There's the kind like stew: messy, chewy, full of disintegrating carrot and potato, with stringy little bits of chicken and bone, and slivers of onion and parsnip. And then there's the stuff that's been left to stand, allowed to cool and settle, had all its scum skimmed off, and then had a quick whisk through a blender: smooth, consistent, soup without lumps and a good matt finish. Nick Hornby's books are more like the second type of soup: they're a kind of literary puree.

It's almost as if Hornby's prose has been drained through a sieve: all the substance, all the verbiage, all the usual tedious fatty stuff that you get in novels has been rubbed through until the whole is easily digestible. Which is presumably why people like it: reading his books is like eating Heinz Tomato Soup; it's comfort food. Good ordinary popular English literature, like good old-fashioned British food, probably never went away, but now it's fashionable again, and Hornby is head chef.

About A Boy, like Fever Pitch and High Fidelity before it, is filling and perfectly tasty, though still lacking in some indefinable quality, some seasoning that would add complexity to the taste. It's essentially a coming-of-age novel, in which not one but two people get to come of age: one of them, Will Freeman, is in his 30s; the other, Marcus, is a 12-year-old, on the cusp of adolescence.

Marcus and his mum have recently moved to London, and it's taking him a while to learn how to fit in with the other children at his new school. Will is a waster who spends his time trying to pick up needy thirtysomething single mothers. He eventually finds a purpose to his sad life in his friendship with Marcus and in his relationship with a new girlfriend, Rachel. During the course of the book everybody grows up and grows wiser. Even Fiona, Marcus's suicidal mum, cheers up a bit by the end.



Nick Hornby: a dumbed-down Iris Murdoch PHOTO: CHRIS SAUNDERS

Hornby says as much, and in so many words: "All three of them had had to lose things in order to gain other things. Will had lost his shell and his cool and his distance, and he felt scared and vulnerable, but he got to be with Rachel; and Fiona had lost a big chunk of Marcus, and she got to stay away from the casualty ward; and Marcus had lost himself, and got to walk home from school with his shoes on." And that's about the measure of it, in terms of both style and substance.

As a straightforward book about emotional survival, with a few strong central characters and a few laughs, About A Boy reads very much like a book for "young adults". The snappy, droll dialogue, the set-pieces at parties, the detailing of the dilemmas of post-pubescence (namely, the big questions about sex, death and the meaning of life), the chronicling of confused individuals' wild hopes and disappointments, and the constant reminder that somehow life must go on even though we don't quite know why, mean that About A Boy merits comparison with the Holden Caulfield-haunted American teen-fiction of the late 1960s and 1970s. It's that good.

Except of course that Hornby stays tethered to his familiar north London territory, and stays faithful to his music and his football. He sticks to the tried-and-tested creative writing formula, and writes about what he knows: which is a three or four kilometre radius around Highbury and Islington, and the history of pop, from the first Clash album onwards (the title, presumably, is a nod to Nirvana's "About a Girl"; the death of Kurt Cobain features heavily as a plot device).

The usual ingredients are bound together with an emulsifying agent of vague, sub-philosophical musing, and the overall tone is instructive: observe and do otherwise. Hornby is in fact beginning to sound increasingly like a dumbed-down Iris Murdoch: the books repeat again and again the same convoluted emotional relationships and re-heat the same strained philosophy.

Taken — swallowed — as a whole it's a real broth of a book, and if you enjoyed the last two you won't mind another helping. Mrs Beeton, for one, would have approved: "The valuable dietetic properties of soup have been, and indeed still are, much overlooked . . . no form of food is more digestible . . . nor does any other method of preparing food afford so many opportunities for utilising material that would otherwise be wasted."

 (see page 29)

On best behaviour

Lewis Wolpert

The Social Animal
by W G Runciman
HarperCollins 144pp £14.99

FOR Runciman this is a particularly exciting time to be engaged in sociological research, and he has given us a valuable introduction for non-specialists; but considering how critical he is of some of his professional colleagues, they too would benefit from reading it. Sociology refers to the study of human behaviour in relation to social life in which humans attach meaning to their relationships, and tries to understand various human groups and institutions, both present and past.

Runciman is committed, though he rarely applies it, to a Darwinian evolutionary approach — descent with modification — in which one thinks of cultures or societies having their probability of replication enhanced. This attempt to identify replicators and selection in social processes has a strong Procrustean feel, forcing his ideas to fit the Darwinian bed he has made for them.

A key feature of Darwinian theory is selection, and even if an analogy can be drawn between the information content of culture and genes, I still cannot see what the selection process is. Society involves complex interactions, and it is these dynamic processes that need to be understood. An example of this approach is provided by his discussion of the so-called Matthew Effect, that the winner takes all. The sudden escalation of the financial rewards for top executives, sports stars and writers in the United States is accounted for in terms of the changes in the environment, such as an increase in the consumer market.

Sociologists and anthropologists have a problem when they come to studying an alien culture. The case of Margaret Mead being grossly misled by the Samoans is well known. But it is possible to identify with the habits of a different culture and Evans Pritchard, when he lived with the Azande, managed to regulate his affairs in accordance with the oracle's decisions and always kept a supply of poison handy. But this descriptive exercise is different from the formulation of explanatory hypotheses of such behaviour.

Runciman is suspicious of the search for the Big Idea — as in the case of Marx (under capitalism man exploits man; under socialism it is the other way round) — and includes the theories of Weber and Durkheim. Apart from Marxism, the dominant ideas on sociology this century have been functionalism, structuralism, and behaviourism — all of which are anti-evolutionary — and he catalogues what he believes to be their weaknesses.

In discussing the history of Rome and the fall of the Republic, Runciman illustrates what has been called the Genetic Fallacy, that is assuming the cause of an event explains its consequences. So it was not Julius Caesar's courage and ambition that led to the fall of the Republic. But could there not also be the Sociological Fallacy which assumes that one knows the cause of a particular historical set of events? Maybe a single cause is an illusion and it is the result of complex dynamics. In my own subject, embryonic development, there are many interactions leading to the development of the limb, but no single cause, although one can identify causal connections such as the signals that initiate new processes.

RUNCIMAN is concerned with sociologists who are, under the guise of academic analysis, pushing a political agenda. As an example, he takes a piece that starts with the statistic that the richest 1 per cent of our society hold more than 90 per cent of personal wealth, and suggests that this is essentially an anti-capitalist tract. But I find this difficult to accept. The issue is whether or not it is true. In sociology, as in science, reliable knowledge is value free, the moral issues arise only in relation to how the information is used.

While he retains a vision of sociology as an exciting mystery story, there is a pessimistic conclusion that what "sociology teaches is how little it can do, or ever will, to predict how the patterns of roles constitutive of human groups, communities, institutions and societies are actually going to evolve". But since there are so many who believe that they both know how society works and how best to change it, this book deserves to be very widely studied.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

England Is Mine, by Michael Bracewell (Flamingo, £7.99)

A RISKY enterprise, trying to achieve a synthesis of English ...re which includes Oscar Wilde, ...atter Of Life And Death, Lindsay Anderson, Evelyn Waugh, The ...re, Radclyffe Hall, Wyndham ...is, Rosamond Lehmann and the Smiths; the book's subtitle is ...p Life In Albion from Wilde to ...die", which signals an anxious, ...t deranged hipness, and ...s us that we may be about to ...d an act rather than a critique of ...glish (not British) navel-gazing.

...t Bracewell succeeds. The joy ...the book comes from putting ...self in his hands as he embarks ...his strange, circuitous odyssey. ...an jump from the orbits of high ...d low culture without breaking ...e, or striking a false note. He ...has a sense of humour, and ...vides expert, relishable thumb-...sketches along the way; The ...Group were "young men deeply ...nched in a psycho-melodrama, ...whom torture and oppression ...e the pop thematic equivalent of ...round blondes and little red ...ettes". A few omissions, but it's ...a great way of understanding ...e English.

Hidden Agendas, by John Pilger (Vintage, £8.99)

THOSE of us who are dismayed ...by the ease and swiftness with ...h Tony Blair and his cronies ...e taken the Thatcherite line will ...d comfort in this book, albeit a ...ewhat *frappé* comfort (it means ...hilled", Tony, but you probably ...ew that already). For even if you ...ady thought that the world was a ...ry and disastrous one, this will ...give you some nasty moments.

Pilger is the master of the crush...g juxtaposition. The pious hand-...ringing after Dunblane looks a ...e less holy when placed next to ...e Government's continuing sale of ...s and aircraft to the murderers ...control Indonesia; Britain's ...gular denouncement of "terror-...sts" sits uneasily next to her treat-...ent of the indigenous population ...Diego Garcia, which involved ...ing them all off the island and ...ing it into a US military base.

There's plenty more to be getting ...with here. Burma, East Timor, ...rdoch and China: the sheer scale ...d intensity of injustice around the ...rld is shocking, revolting, and ...t much fun to read — not least ...ause our acquiescence in the ...rsion of events we get to hear ...rges on the culpable. But every-...e should read this, and if it dis-...mforts the cretins, charlatans and ...tical betrayers who run the whole ...n show, so much the better.

The man who fell to earth

Tim Radford

Starman: The Truth Behind the Legend of Yuri Gagarin
by Jamie Doran and Piers Bizony
Bloomsbury 248pp £17.99

SPACEMEN are often young, invariably upwardly mobile and always professional. Luck put them quite literally at the sharp end, and they would have gone nowhere without the huge thrust of intellect and effort below them. But they all had vaulting ambition. The road to heaven is paved with more than just good intentions.

On the morning of April 12, 1961, no one had heard of Yuri Gagarin. By noon of that day he was the most famous man in the world. At 9.06 Moscow time, he accelerated away from the Baikonur space station strapped into a Vostok spacecraft poised on top of an R-7 rocket and at 10.55 Moscow time, after not-quite one complete revolution of the planet at 28,000 kilometres an hour, he tumbled out of the sky near a village called Smelkovka in the Saratov region to be greeted by an astonished woman, a child and a dappled calf. "Can it be that you have come from outer space?" the woman asked him. "As a matter of fact, I have," said the first cosmonaut.

Gagarin had a grin that lit up the darkness of the cold war and a natural grace that made him one of the best ambassadors the USSR ever had. The Soviet prime minister, Nikita Khrushchev, liked him: a simple lad of peasant origins who came up the hard way. The title promises the truth: what the text demonstrates is how hard it is to get Soviet heroes in focus.

Space oddity . . . Gagarin's fame brought him to earth with a bump

There is testimony from Gagarin's brother and sister, and from fellow cosmonauts such as Gherman Titov, the second man in orbit, and the observations, letters and memoirs of people within and outside the space business. They confirm some things that were never in any doubt. Gagarin was a first-class pilot and a hardworking student, he was in terrific physical condition and he was psychologically about as steady as a man could get. But it took all of that to be selected either for the Russian or the American space programme. Afterwards he found his fame a strain: who wouldn't?

In 1942, when he was eight, the Germans occupied his home village. More than 20 million Russians died at the hands of the Nazis. All the Gagarins survived. Yuri is remembered as "going down into the cellar to find bread, potatoes, milk and vegetables, and distributing them to refugees from other districts". He is remembered as secretly sabotaging German tank batteries, and shoving potatoes into the exhausts of Nazi military cars. He saved his mother from being scythed to death by throwing clods into the eyes of a German sergeant.

The adult Gagarin was determined, generous and brave. No doubt the boy was too. But in Stalin's Russia, no other version of events would have been advisable. For a Hero of the Soviet Union, no other version of events would be thinkable. And, even after the collapse of communism, why would anyone want to change the story?

Gagarin used to point out that his Hero of the Soviet Union medal was marked number 11,175. "That means that 11,174 people accomplished something worthwhile before me," he would say, becomingly.

He accomplished something worthwhile for Nasa: the flight galvanised President Kennedy into a decision and in four years Nasa's spending commanded 5 per cent of the entire federal budget. Gagarin toured the world, supped with the Queen, and holidayed with the privileged in the Crimea. He caused a muted scandal by drunkenly propositioning a woman and then leaping out of a window to escape discovery by his wife.

After Khrushchev was deposed, things went downhill for Gagarin and the space programme. He tried to do things for people — he certainly tried to prevent the fatal flight of his colleague Vladimir Komarov in 1967 aboard an ill-prepared Soyuz spacecraft — but he never went aloft again himself, and was training to maintain his fighter pilot's status when he crashed, mysteriously, in 1968. He was literally blown to pieces. He had two daughters. His wife lives on in a very modest house and almost never speaks to journalists.

Old dog learns new tricks

Julia Eccleshare on the winner of the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize

THE four shortlisted books for this year's Guardian Children's Fiction Prize represent the quality and breadth of contemporary children's publishing. The judges were looking for a novel for seven-year-olds and upwards that would entertain and excite readers for years to come.

In Jane Stemp's Secret Songs (Hodder) they found a book that showed enormous insight in dealing with the world of the deaf heroine; in The Track Of The Wind (Mammoth) they relished Jamila Gavin's handling of the complexities of the partition of India; they were delighted by the good humour and pace of J K Rowling's Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone (Bloomsbury); but the striking and original voice of Henrietta Branford's Fire, Bed And Bone (Walker Books) carried the day unanimously.

A story told through the eyes of an old hunting dog could have all kinds of problems. So could the historical setting of the Peasants' Revolt. But Branford's vibrant and polished writing transcends both effortlessly.

Starting with the last whelping of the old dog who wants nothing more than the fire, bed and bone of the title, Branford tackles the major issues of birth, death and the separations between mother and child — human and animal — with a direct honesty that avoids both the mawkish and the sentimental. On the contrary, the emotions that most strongly fuel the book are courage and the need to fight for freedom.

Branford is a passionate believer in both. "I value courage," she says. "If I were a fairy godmother I would give children courage. You can't promise children safety, but you can give them the courage to help them survive. I don't like pretending that the world is a safe place or that we can keep our children safe. You cannot predict what will happen but you can say, 'Be brave'."

Likened by one of the judges to E B White's Charlotte's Web, with mothers at once protecting and abandoning their young, this is a story about growing and parting. Rufus and Comfort, the human couple in the story, are taken from their children for their part in the peasants' uprising against the combined power of their landlords and the Church. Rufus is hanged. The dogs, too, are unable to protect their young from both animal and human predators. Telling the story through the old dog's eyes gives Branford the opportunity to describe the countryside with a sharpness that is a vital ingredient of the book.

"I was brought up on the edge of the New Forest," she says. "What my father taught me about animals comes through. It took a long time to get the dog's voice — it started out as a pig — but once I had it, the story of the Peasants' Revolt followed quite easily." It is that voice which shapes the book.

Dream machine

Sylvia Brownrigg

Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer
by Steven Millhauser
Phoenix House 293pp £12.99

THE setting of Steven Millhauser's glittering new novel is New York at the turn of the century, when "the city was a fever-patient in a hospital, thrashing in its sleep, erupting in modern dreams". With bright and quivering energy Millhauser brings the city to life at its quintessentially American stage — yearning, striving, climbing, hungry: busy with those virtues that may also be perils, when dreams grow so great they eventually collapse under the weight of their own ambition.

Martin Dressler is, as the subtitle suggests, a moral tale "of an American dreamer". In it Martin, son of a German cigar store owner, makes a dramatic series of moves, from hotel bellboy to clerk, from manager of a chain of lunchrooms to manager and builder of ever more fabulous hotels. In winning last year's Pulitzer Prize, Martin Dressler threw a belated light on Millhauser, whose smart, magical fictions are often both meticulously historical and also subject to wild, Calvino-like flights into the fanciful.

Millhauser is drawn to dreamers. In Martin Dressler it is Martin's dream-like achievement, a hotel called the Grand Cosmo, that proves his undoing and carries him off.

But on the way to Martin's final folly, Millhauser lingers over the busy, real world — in almost overwhelming detail. He is irrepressible in his description of chair fabrics, elevator workings, plumbing material, awning colours, bridge suspensions, building works, machinery. Meanwhile the novel's emotional story is rather stifled, as Martin falls passively into marriage with Caroline, who is "tense and languorous", an unsettling combination. The poignant fact is that it is her sister, Emmeline, with whom Martin has an intellectual bond; it is she who hears his great plans as he conceives them.

The novel thrums with the animated prose with which Millhauser canvasses his city and the dreams of his dreamer. Millhauser is fascinated by the way New York simultaneously colonised the sky as well as the underground. New York is "a fierce and magical city of moving iron, while along the trembling avenues there rose, in the clashing air, higher and higher still, buildings". Like the city's designers, Martin wants to build hotels that grow ever higher even as they burrow further underground — where his hotels nurture whole submerged department stores and pleasure gardens.

Millhauser's imagination is drawn to worlds within worlds (museums, arcades, circuses), and so the hotel — in its 19th century sense providing permanent as well as transient residence — is an ideal metaphor. Martin's ambition becomes explicitly godlike: like the designers of the Titanic, he wants the Grand Cosmo to have every luxury, every diversion. In fact he wants it to have everything; Martin succumbs to "a yearning for the exhaustive, which was the secret malady of the age".

Finally, fiction and ambition spin out of control, and Martin's wonderful Grand Cosmo leaves the map of the real, taking Martin with it.

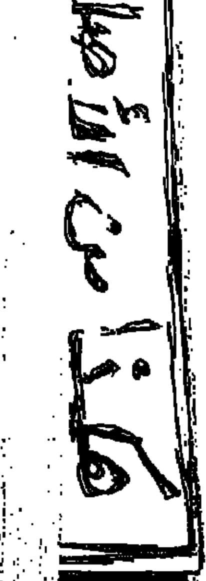


ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Leave it to the beaver

Paul Evans

IN THE mid-17th century, the poet Christopher Smart pleaded "for the introduction of new creatures into this island. I pray God for the ostriches of Salisbury Plain, the beavers of the Medway and silver fish of Thames". Ostriches and silver fishes apart, if ever there was a creature that belongs in Britain, it is the loveable beaver.

The 12th century writer Giraldus Cambrensis gave a detailed account of beavers but said they had disappeared from Britain with the exception of the Teifi river in Wales and an unknown river in Scotland. Their wooded, streamside habitat destroyed, and hunted mercilessly for their fur and scent glands, beavers had, by the middle ages, become semi-fabulous beasts whose fur was imported to make hats.

The Eurasian beaver, *Castor fiber*, our largest rodent weighing up to 35kg, is thought have survived in Scotland until the 16th century. In 19th century Europe isolated beaver populations hung on in the Elbe basin in Germany, the Rhône basin in France, and southern Norway. Small numbers remained in Belarus, Russia and Mongolia. Since the 1920s, and particularly during the last 30 years or so, 14 European countries have been establishing new colonies of the toothy, flat-tailed rodents through reintroductions from these remaining populations. The European population of beavers currently numbers about 160,000, with at least 100,000 in former Soviet Union countries.

Britain may have been the first country in Western Europe to lose its beavers. It has certainly been one of the last to do anything about it. Until now. After at least 400 years of extinction, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has launched a public consultation process to negotiate the return of the natives.

After a feasibility study, SNH has concluded that Scotland could support a wild population of up to 1,000 beavers and favours the river catchments and lochs of the Ness, Lomond, Tay, Spey, Dee and Don for reintroduction. Although recent polls have shown that two-thirds of Scots want the beavers back, SNH is at pains to gather further support against pressure from powerful landowners.

The Scottish Landowners Federation (SLF) are not openly hostile, but they're not eager either. "I'm open-minded," says Hugh Campbell Adamson of the SLF, "but we must be sure that in 50 to 100 years' time we won't have the same problems as with grey squirrels and coypu. There's a risk of river erosion, flooding of farmland, damage to trees and damage to fishing interests. It's naive to expect the beaver to slot back into the countryside after so long, and it might pose an unacceptable risk."

Scientists who have studied European re-introductions think these concerns are unfounded, and fisheries' experts say that beavers will actually enhance fishing. Thanks to a European Union Habitats and Species directive that mandates the British government to reinstate extinct species where feasible, the beaver has the law on its side.

For Alan Watson Featherstone, executive director of Trees For Life, bringing back beavers has a much greater significance. "Humans have derailed evolution in Scotland by destroying the ecosystem and leaving wreckage of the natural forest scattered," he says.

"Bringing back the beaver is a significant step to putting back the pieces so that evolution can take its own course again. Reinstating forest animals like the beaver touches people physically and spiritually and is wholeheartedly welcomed."

Chess Leonard Barden

OXBRIDGE chess players have become pragmatic. The annual varsity match, which launched many future GM and IM pros during the Bobby Fischer boom of the seventies, now features nascent economists, scientists and mathematicians.

This year Oxford's top board, Dharshan Kumaran, is a grandmaster and a double junior world champion, but he was just a student taking a day off from his medical studies.

Chess can still offer tangible rewards if you are lucky as well as talented. Cambridge's third board, Harriet Hunt, who won the 1997 world girls under-20, was probably the first reigning world champion to take part in the venerable annual series that began in 1873, when Steinitz and Zukertort were spectators.

Oxford's second board, Jonathan Rowson, has found his personal crock of gold in the shape of an anonymous backer who has financed $8,000 matches at which the 20-year-old Scot has so far beaten a GM and an IM. And the backer is getting more ambitious: Rowson's next six-game series will be against Michael Adams, a mismatch for the British number one, but a great opportunity for an economics student.

Last month's varsity match was sponsored by Tony Buzan of the Brain Trust, and staged in traditionally elegant ambience at the RAC Club in Pall Mall, London. Oxford won 5-3 to reduce its overall deficit to 49-50, with 17 draws. The chess was excellent. Kumaran, Rowson and Hunt all won in impressive style, possibly the highest quality play on the top boards in the match's long history.

J Rowson v B Kelly

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Be3 a6 7 Qd2 Nf6 8 0-0-0 Be7 9 f4 0-0 10 Be2 Bd7 11 g4 Nxd4 12 Qxd4 Bc6 13 g5 Nd7 14 Rhg1 **e5 15 fxe5 Nxe5 16** Rg3 Rc8 **17 Bc4!?** After normal Sicilian Defence foreplay where White advances menacingly on the BK wing Black sets up a central strongpoint, an interesting idea. White's plan Bd5 persuades Black to exchange off his outpost knight.

Nxc4 If Bxe4 18 Qxe4 Rxc4 ... Qxb7. **18 Qxc4 b5 19** Qb3 Q... **20 g6** Forcing open lines and preventing a queen swap that could activate Black's bishop pair. Qe6 **21 gxh7+ Kh8 22** Bd4 Qh6+ ... **Kb1 Bf6 24 Bxf6** Qxf6 25 Q... **Rfd8 26 Rgd3 Qh4** 27 Rg3 Q... **28 Rdg1 g6 29 h4** Kxh7 30 R... **Rg8 31 Rg5 Kh6 32** e5 dxe5 ... **Qh4 Kg7?** Kelly, the best young player in Ireland, has defended coolly but here Qf4 34 R5g4 g5! ... better chance as White's back row ... vulnerable. **34 hxg6** fxg6 35 N... **Bxe4 36 Qxe4 Kf8** 37 Rxe5 **Rd8 38 Qb4+ Qd6** 39 Rf1+ K... **40 Re7+ Resigns.**

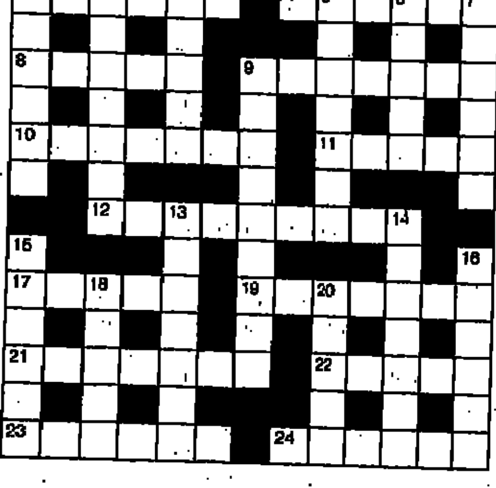
No 2518

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g
8							♗
7							♟
6							
5							
4		♕				♗	
3			♘				
2			♘				♙ ♟
1	♖				♔		

The black king is missing from the board, so where must it be placed for it to be checkmate in one move? This offbeat puzzle by W Keym is harder than it looks, is a good test of chess logic and has caught out strong players.

No 2517: 1 Rf6 (threat 2 Nf3+) g1Q 2 Rxg1). If h2 2 Re6 ... **3 Rh6. If Kh2 2 Rf3 Kh1 3 Rxh3.**

Quick crossword no. 413



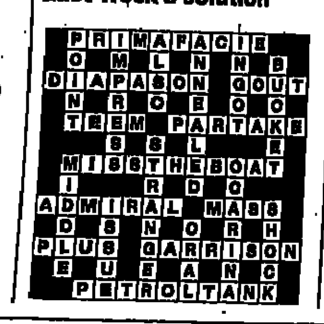
Across

1 Small marsupial (6)
4 Wading bird (6)
8 Animal like short-necked giraffe (5)
9 Animal of the weasel family (7)
10 Dreamlike, bizarre (7)
11 Kind of gazelle (5)
12 Aquatic rodent (5,4)
17 Antelope resembling an elk (5)
19 Nematode invertebrate (7)
21 Person's attractive quality (7)
22 World's most populous country (5)
23 Team — number (6)
24 Peruvian llama (6)

Down

1 French novelist, Marcel (6)
2 Common bird (7)
3 Combine (5)
5 No vocal (anag) — may blow its top (7)
6 Spherical bacteria (5)
7 Gossip (6)
9 White, arctic animal (5,4)
13 Immature frog (7)
14 Amatory literature (7)
15 Small hound (6)
16 South African antelope (6)
18 Astound (5)
20 Neighbourhood — pub (5)

Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

I AM NOT a great fan of double dummy problems, or the par contests that used to be popular many years ago. Such exercises are far removed from the kind of bridge I find stimulating — the thrill of improvising at the table, of finding psychological solutions based on the human element, rather than computer-like technical plays. Achieving par is all very well, but beating par is better still — and you can't do that until you first learn to play the game naturally, using the rules of good technique but not living by them all the time.

The greatest exponent of this bridge philosophy was the late Irving Rose, who would have been 60 years old in February but for his untimely death. Irving excelled at both the psychological and the technical side of bridge, but he greatly preferred to win by some bold and imaginative coup than by a laboriously calculated percentage play. Try to match his style on the hand below. You are the dealer at rubber bridge, with the score at game all:

♠AKJ 10 8 6 4 3 2 ♥3 ♦None ♣9 6 2

I'd expect your opening bid to depend on what kind of player you are: four spades for the solid, middle-of-the-road type; one spade for the scientist, leaving room to explore the road ahead; three spades for the ultra-conservatives in belt and braces; two spades (Weak? Strong? Who cares?) for the imaginative. None of these appealed in the least to Rose, who passed! West on his left opened with one heart, North passed, and East bid two clubs. The stage was set for Irving, who bid three spades — not four spades, for that would sound too suspicious. That could wait until the next round, when it might appear that he really was sacrificing. West bid four diamonds, which North doubled for penalties, creating a perfect situation for Irving. His four spades bid would surely now be taken as a cry of abject weakness. So it was, for West doubled it and all passed to complete a memorable auction:

South Rose	West	North	East
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣
3♠	4♦	Dble	Pass
4♠	Dble	All pass	

West led the king of hearts, and North put down an eminently suitable dummy:

North
♠ 7 5
♥ A 10 9 8 7
♦ K J 10 5
♣ J 10

West
♠ None
♥ K Q J 6 5 2
♦ A Q 9 6 3
♣ Q 5

East
♠ Q 9
♥ 4
♦ 8 7 4 2
♣ A K 8 7 4 ...

South
♠ A K J 10 8 6 4 3 2
♥ 3
♦ None
♣ 9 6 2

Winning the opening lead with dummy's ace, Rose led the jack of clubs. East won with the king and switched to a trump, but Rose won that in his hand and played a second club. The defence was helpless — West won with the queen, he had no trump to play to prevent a club ruff in dummy, while if East overtook ... queen with the ace to play a spade ... no club ruff would be needed ... the nine would be a master ... course, if Irving had opened four spades, West would probably have overcalled five hearts and gone ... 1,100 instead of the actual score ... 1,090 — but that would not have been nearly as satisfying.

Rugby Union Five Nations Championship: Wales 0 France 51

French fire engulfs all nations

Robert Armstrong at Wembley

FRANCE, clicking through the gears like a custom-built sportscar, brushed aside Wales with an awesome display of running last Sunday that underlined their status as the northern hemisphere's best bet for next year's World Cup.

If there were a league against cruel team sports, this French side would have charges to answer, so lethal was their cutting edge and so ruthless their tenacity as they clinched back-to-back Grand Slams for the first time. They also inflicted the heaviest margin of defeat in the Five Nations as Wales failed to score in a championship match for the first time since 1992.

It was obvious that France have absorbed the dynamic lessons of southern-hemisphere rugby as the hapless Welsh struggled to maintain a semblance of dignity amid the tide of blue shirts. Pace, flexibility and the ability to attack from any part of the field provided the foundations of a high-scoring style that yielded seven tries and earned France the right to brandish the Five Nations trophy on Wembley's turf.

Poor Wales, without Scott Gibbs and Allan Bateman to shore up their midfield, resembled so many red pillar-boxes, such was their lack of mobility. True, Robert Howley's men did raise the tempo in the second half, but the scoreboard continued to reflect France's authority.

Thomas Castaignède was the multi-skilled architect of his side's bewildering patterns of attack, tormenting Welsh defenders with abrupt changes of pace, precise transfers long and short, and an uncanny awareness of when to go for the jugular. In Philippe Carbonneau, the blond-haired French No 10, he had a resourceful half-back partner who cleared the ball away from the breakdown with an efficiency that would appeal to the All Blacks.

While the French back row, smoothly propelled by the driving of Olivier Magne on the open side, manufactured the bullets for their backs to fire, their counterparts got involved in foul play. Colin Charvis, Stuart Davies and Rob Appleyard were each yellow-carded, as was the France centre Stéphane Glas.

Wales had suffered an embarrassing 42-7 defeat by New Zealand at Wembley in the autumn, yet this latest setback will be even more painful to absorb, coming only a month after their record 60-24 defeat by England at Twickenham. The green shoots of promise shown by the Welsh team who defeated Ireland and Scotland were trampled underfoot by the likes of full-back Jean-Luc Sadourny and the wing Xavier Garbajosa, who each scored two excellent tries.

England, championship runners-up, could accelerate their progress towards new-age rugby by studying French skills instead of focusing exclusively on the methods used in the southern hemisphere. Never mind Bath's European Cup success, the French produce the strongest club sides, a tradition of excellence that has filtered through to the national set-up.

How Wales, the World Cup hosts, can repair the damage is difficult to see. Apart from the admirable Howley and a couple of tentative breaks by Neil Jenkins, who was not given his customary chance to kick penalties, there was little creative intelligence.

France were unwilling to take their foot off the pedal even though they had the match sewn up within half an hour. Their superior ability to cross the gain line, reflected in a total of 43 rucks won, against 21 by Wales, ensured that scoring options arrived at frequent intervals.

Sadourny's gilt-edged tries from short passes by Glas and Philippe Bernat-Salles in the third and 14th minutes put Wales on the rack before they could take stock. A close-range score by Thomas Lièvremont quickly followed and shortly before the interval Glas broke out of a Welsh tackle and crossed the line to put his side 29-0 in front. Christophe Lamaison's goalkicking, which brought him 16 points, seemed almost superfluous.

While Wales struggled vainly to break their duck the lively Garbajosa added a couple of tries near the beginning and end of the second half, and between times the substitute Fabien Galthié joined in the fun with a score at the posts. France performed as if programmed, while for bemused Wales it seemed the nightmare would never end.

England 35 Ireland 17

England build on rock-solid base

ENGLAND rounded off their curate's egg of a season with a patchy win last Saturday that gave them their fourth successive Triple Crown and a record championship points aggregate of 146, beating by five the mark they set last year, *writes Robert Armstrong at Twickenham*. Neither achievement is likely to induce cartwheels of joy among Lawrence Dallaglio's men, whose defeat by France was for them the significant result of the tournament.

It is difficult to measure England's progress since the autumn, when they played four Tests without a win, but as their coach Clive Woodward pointed out, their victories over Wales, Scotland and Ireland are habit-forming. Crucially England have developed a modest reservoir of self-belief for the summer tour to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Ireland ended up with the wooden spoon despite reserving their best displays for France and England. But their vibrant, gutsy performance here, embellished by Denis Hickie's splendid brace of tries, will have persuaded traditionalists and television producers that the Five Nations is in robust health.

England deserved their success because their defence was rock-solid when the chips were down, but they failed to make the same calculated use of the strong wind that the Irish did when it was in their favour. "When our backs were competing against the Irish backs we did very well," Woodward said, "but our forwards didn't play the game they would have liked."



Catt: touchdown delight

England supporters relished the non-stop contribution of Neil Back. The Leicester flanker not only delivered the scoring pass for two of England's tries but regularly secured and recycled the ball in the face of the Irish forwards' intimidating challenge, which was not always legal.

Woodward will also have felt reassured by the resurgent form of Martin Johnson, who was in his element as he mixed it with Paddy Johns, David Corkery and Victor Costello. Corkery for his part clashed violently with Dallaglio near the end and the England captain declined to shake hands with the Irish No 6 as they walked off. Amity was restored subsequently.

It was a sign of England's uncertainty in the set pieces that Woodward took off Garath Archer — "he wasn't quite on his game" — in favour of Danny Grewcock after the interval. That substitution may have been an over-reaction to the number of line-outs and turnovers won by the Irish forwards.

England had the game effectively won in the first half, when they built a 25-7 lead. During that period Matt Perry, Jeremy Guscott and Matt Dawson showed qualities of foresight and imagination which Woodward hopes will become second nature throughout the team before next year's World Cup.

By the start of next season Woodward will need to have settled on his first-choice XV plus a support group of, say, 10 to 12 players, otherwise worries about his butterfly approach to selection will swiftly turn into full-blown fears. He should also stop asking players to step into roles that they have not previously filled even at club level.

In his first outing on the wing Mike Catt scored an important try on the stroke of half-time, but the Bath fly-half looked uncomfortable in defence, hardly surprising given the pace of Hickie, whose 35th-minute interception try kept the match alive. Earlier Guscott had set up an exciting score for Perry, and Back had put Richard Cockerill away for a thundering try.

In the second half the Irish quickly got another 10 points — Hickie's second try from Eric Elwood's reverse pass was a gem — but England responded with Paul Grayson's third penalty goal, and their substitute centre Phil de Glanville sealed the win with a thrilling touchdown.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Another series gone with the Windies

WEST INDIES won the fourth one-day international by four wickets at St Vincent to ensure that whatever the outcome of the last match in Trinidad and Tobago skipper Brian Lara will take away the Cable & Wireless Trophy.

Batting first, England were all out in the penultimate over of the innings for 149, with wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs claiming five victims, a record between the two countries.

"We've not batted very well and have deserved to lose," said the England captain Adam Hollioake after defeat condemned the tourists to a series loss at 3-1 down. They also lost the Test Series 3-1.

England won the first match but the home side levelled the five-match series in the most dramatic fashion when — set a victory target of 267 — they won by one wicket with a single ball remaining. The West Indies won the third game by five wickets.

CHELSEA, the last remaining English beacon in Europe, was in danger of being extinguished in Italy. Playing Vicenza in the first leg of the Cup Winners' Cup semi-final, Gianluca Vialli's Blues were beaten 1-0 by a Lamberto Zauli strike in the 16th minute. It was the worst performance of their European campaign. Only a series of superb saves by Ed de Goey kept the scoreline within reach for the second leg as the English team looked tired and complacent after their recent victory over Middlesbrough in the Coca-Cola Cup final.

In the other semi-final, VfB Stuttgart beat Lokomotiv Moscow 2-1.

PETER NICOL of Scotland celebrated his 25th birthday in style — by becoming the first home squash player to win the British Open in 25 years. He beat Jansher Khan 17-16, 15-4, 15-4 in Birmingham to deny the Pakistani legend his seventh successive victory in the competition.

"I did not expect to break him so quickly," said Nicol, whose 58-minute success should ensure he remains the world No 1 for the rest of the year. His next target is to become the first British man to win the World Open, to be played in Bombay in December.

Michelle Martin won the women's title for the sixth successive time with a 30-minute 9-4, 9-2, 9-1 demolition of the top-seeded world champion and fellow-Australian Sarah Fitz-Gerald.

BRITAIN'S Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman completed a clean sweep over Ukraine's tennis duo Andrei Medvedev and Andrei Rybalko in the Davis Cup Euro-African Zone Group One tie at Newcastle. Both won their singles and reverse matches and also beat the Ukrainians in the doubles to triumph 5-0. The World Group beckons Britain now for the first time since 1992 but first they must enter play-offs in September. British coach John Lloyd believes the team will be vulnerable if they are drawn away on clay, but Rusedski reckons they can cope both home and away.

ARSENAL striker Dennis Bergkamp was named as the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year, beating off a strong challenge from Manchester United star Andy Cole, who came second, and Michael Owen, in third place. Owen, the 18-year-old Liverpool striker who in February



Bergkamp: top honour

became the youngest England international this century when he played against Chile, was named Young Player of the Year.

EARTH SUMMIT, trained by Nigel Twiston-Davies and ridden by jockey Carl Llewellyn, ploughed through treacle-like mud at Aintree to win a punishing Grand National by 11 lengths from top-weight Suny Bay. Samlee finished third, a distance behind, and St Mellion Fairway was fourth of the six finishers.

Llewellyn said later: "Earth Summit just kept going — I was worried, but I knew that Suny Bay had 12 stones to carry." This year's race, the slowest on record, was marred by an unusually high number of fatalities. Three horses never made it back to the stables after stumbling at various fences during the race, and another died later. One Man, the nation's favourite chaser, had to be put down after shattering his right hind leg in a fall at the same meeting last week.

LEE WESTWOOD, the rising star of British golf, won his first event in the United States, the New Orleans Classic. He also won $306,000 and, perhaps more importantly, exemption from qualifying for any US Tour event for the next two years. With his 15-under-par total of 273, he won by three shots from the unknown American left-hander Steve Flesch. After only three events in the US this year he has moved to 11th in the money list, with a total of $489,500, after finishing 13th in the Bay Hill Invitational and fifth in the Players Championship.

CRAIG BROWN renewed his contract as manager of Scotland for another four years. He succeeded Andy Roxburgh in the post in November 1993 and under his stewardship Scotland have played 38 matches, winning 20, drawing six and losing 12. He steered the side into both Euro 96 and this year's World Cup finals